Saint Peter Damian's 'Vita beati Romualdi' : introduction, translation and analysis

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SAINT PETER DAMIAN's VITA BEATI ROMUALDI

Introduction, Translation and Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Saint Peter Damian's **Vita Beati Romualdi:** Introduction, Translation and Analysis.

The thesis is a translation and historiographical analysis of Giovanni Tabacco's edition of the **Vita** (Fonti per la storia d'Italia 94, Rome, 1957). Its rationale is the filling of the historiographical gap between the sound establishment of the text and its use as a historical source. The purpose is to evaluate as a historical-literary construct a work of hagiography, not quite history nor quite biography and yet not fiction, written about 1042, to permit its use as a historical source both on firmer foundations than hitherto and more widely. The methods used are adapted from the principles of form criticism and redaction criticism developed for Bible analysis. The analysis takes the form of a threefold commentary. It begins with a kind of exegesis of the finished text, divided into small units of information and translated in sequence, to elucidate what the author understood and meant to convey by what he wrote, especially where allegory and typology may be involved. (It is argued that his overall purpose is to promote Italian eremitism as practised at his own hermitage of Fonte Avellana.) It proceeds from this to an assessment of the sources he has drawn on, both oral sources about the saint and written authorities on the religious life. Lastly the information offered is evaluated for its status as historical evidence. The analysis is preceded by a methodological and historical introduction.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ben. Reg.	**The Rule of St. Benedict**
Blum, **Peter Damian**	O.J. Blum, **St. Peter Damian: His Teaching on the Spiritual Life** (The Catholic University of America Studies in Mediaeval History, New Series 10, Washington, 1947).
Brezzi and Nardi	P. Brezzi and B. Nardi, **San Pier Damiani: De divina omnipotentia e altri opuscoli** (Edizione Nazionale dei classici de pensiero Italiano 5, Florence, 1943).
CCSL	**Corpus Christianorum Series Latina** (Turnholt, 1952 -).
CSEL	**Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum** (Vienna, 1866).
Franke	W. Franke, **Romuald von Camaldoli und seine Reformtätigkeit zur Zeit Ottos III** (Berlin, 1913).
Lawrence	C.H. Lawrence, **Medieval Monasticism: Forms of religious life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages** (London, 1984).

Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**	J. Leclercq, **Saint Pierre Damien: Ermite et homme d'Eglise** (Uomini et dottrine 8, Rome, 1960).
Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**	_____, "Saint Romuald et le monachisme missionaire", **Revue Bénédictine** (1962), 307-323.
Meysztowicz	V. Meysztowicz, "La vocation monastique d'Otton III", **Antemurale 4** (1958).
Niermeyer	J.F. Niermeyer, **Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus** (Leiden, 1976).
OLD	P.G.W. Glare, ed., **Oxford Latin Dictionary** (Oxford, 1982).
PL	J.P. Migne, ed., **Patrologia Latina** (Paris, 1841-1864).
SSSpoleto	**Settimane di Studio sull'alto medioevo** (Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, Spoleto, 1954 -).
Tabacco, **Romualdo**	G. Tabacco, "Romualdo di Ravenna e gli inizi dell'eremitismo camaldolese", **SSSpoleto** (1965), 73-121.

Vfr.	R. Kade, ed., **Brunonis Vita Quinque Fratrum**, in **Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum**, vol. 15 (Hanover, 1888), cols. 709-738.
VR	G. Tabacco, ed., **Petri Damiani Vita Beati Romualdi** (Fonti per la storia d'Italia 94, Rome, 1957).
Vita Antonii	Athanasius of Alexandria, tr. Evagrius, **Vita Beati Antonii Abbatis**, PL73, cols. 125-194.

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1. THE LIFE

Author, date and place

Although its author was evidently not in the hermitage throughout the time of writing, the **Vita Beati Romualdi** is a product of the eremitical community of Fonte Avellana in north-eastern Italy. Peter Damian, a native of Ravenna and probably born about 1007,[1] had entered this hermitage some time between 1035 and 1037 after rejecting the scholastic existence in which he had spent his youth in Faenza, Parma and Ravenna.[2] Intelligent, well educated, deeply devout and evidently a strong personality, he was from 1043 prior of Fonte Avellana, for whose constitutions he was largely responsible,[3] and afterwards cardinal bishop of Ostia, papal legate, saint and doctor of the Church. The older saint, whose **Life** he wrote not later than 1042[4], was also from Ravenna and was directly or indirectly responsible for the foundation or early development of Fonte Avellana, which combined observances of his with the **Rule** of St. Benedict.[5] He was in this sense Damian's spiritual grandfather.[6] Although the monastery of San Vincenzo **ad Petram Pertusam** was evidently the place of writing, at least some of the time, and the community there almost certainly contributed some of the information used by Damian, the work was probably completed at Fonte Avellana.[7] In any case, the first fact of the **Life** is that saint and hagiographer were connected through that hermitage. The whole **Life** is presented from an eremitical point of view.

Audience and purpose

In the first paragraph of his prologue, however, Damian gives no indication that he was writing particularly for hermits. He mentions the multitudes who gathered at Romuald's shrine (at the monastery of Val di Castro) to witness the many miracles worked there, and their sagacious desire to hear also of the saintly life that had led to these wonders; a desire that could not be met as no such **Life** existed. This is the only particular and contemporary audience mentioned. Before this he writes in general terms, lamenting the absence hitherto of anyone "**qui profuturum aliquid edificationi proximorum ad posterorum velit memoriam scedulis annotare**", and pointing out the need for a record "**ad communem utilitatem ... sancte ecclesie**". He finishes the paragraph with a statement of anxiety for the future: "**pertimescimus ne celeberrima eius fama, que adhuc populi totius ore depromitur, labente curriculo temporum, de memoria hominum penitus deleatur**". He begins the next paragraph by describing himself as "**compulsus multorum fratrum precibus**". Taken together, these various statements suggest that Damian had no narrowly conceived audience in mind. He was writing for contemporary, local religious who already knew of Romuald and wanted to know more; for the various pilgrims to the shrine, who, he indicates, knew virtually nothing; and repeatedly in his own claims, for posterity. Beyond this, the first audience of any writer is himself - and it is clear that Damian's image of Romuald meant a great deal to him[8] - and a work of hagiography, sincerely written, will always be in some sense an act of worship, an offering to God and the saint as they look down on it from Heaven.[9]

If it was not written for a particular audience, the **Life** of Romuald

shows no sign of having been written for a narrow purpose either. Some of it records details of fasting, psalmody and other ascetic practices which might have been of special interest to religious, but such information occupies only a small proportion of the work; it is not a vicarious **Rule of Saint Romuald.** Various miracles are recorded, but only two of these had occurred after the saint's death, and then neither of them at the main shrine at Val di Castro; in accord with Damian's claim in the second paragraph of his prologue, where he explains the kind of information he will include, it is not a list of marvels. His statement of intent is in fact that he will produce a work of **general** utility: **"quod ad edificationem omnimodis attinet, conversationis eius ordinem referre contendam."**

Throughout the **Life,** Damian uses the phrase **sancta conversatio** in its monastic sense, meaning simply the condition of life of a sincere monk, whether eremitical or coenobitic. What exactly he intends by his promise to edify by relating the **"conversationis eius ordinem"** therefore depends on his conception of the nature and purpose of the monastic life. It rapidly becomes evident as the work unfolds that he does not regard it as characterised exclusively by worship. Most of the chapters in fact deal with Romuald's relations with one class or another of his neighbours: lay nobles and emperors, **coenobia** both established and inchoate, bishops and abbots, group hermits, an anchorite, pagans and missionaries to pagans, cities in turmoil, lunatics and paupers in distress, disciples both saintly and fractious; Romuald works for God among all of these. His exemplary **conversatio** as Damian records it is therefore much more than a life of **devotion** to God, devout indeed as the saint is; it is a life as God's **agent** among men.[10] When the ideal monk withdraws from the world of fallen men to live with God, he becomes a strong link in a chain of

restoration and redemption that draws other men and women back to Paradise after him.

The definitive characteristic of this agent is that he is a hermit. In the first chapter, his predestined conversion to the solitary life is already foreshadowed. By the fourth chapter of the seventy-two into which the **Life** is commonly divided, he is in his first hermitage. Damian believed in the power of eremitism. Because it renounced the fallen world more completely than any other form of religion, it was the acme of the Christian life, the stronghold of the divine in the midst of evil, the hope for the restoration of Paradise, a ladder to Heaven. Through His holy hermits, God could send forth blessings to Christians of all categories and even to the heathen beyond the bounds of Christendom. The **Life** of Romuald proves this. He is the hagiographer's image of a **model** hermit, his **Life** the first major work to be written by the younger saint. It is a kind of **credo** by a passionate convert to eremitism, Damian's apologia of this vocation to anyone who might care to listen, **"ad communem utilitatem sancte ecclesie"**.

Oral sources

All the information available to Damian appears to have been oral. Although Romuald is described in St. Bruno of Querfurt's **Vita quinque fratrum**[11] and is mentioned in a few other written sources, there is no evidence, internal or external, that Damian had any access to such material.[12] What he knew is what he was told by north-east Italian monks; **"quod de predicto mirabili viro ab egregiis eius discipulis didici"**, as he states in the prologue. The **Life** is therefore a patchwork of reminiscences of various kinds provided by religious of

various categories (it is clear that they were not all hermits) living in various places and remembering the various points about Romuald for various reasons. There is no unity to the material except for the pattern according to which Damian has himself arranged it.

Because the work is in the form of a biography but is not really biographical in purpose (and probably also because of the quality of the sources), this pattern is roughly, but very imperfectly, chronological. Damian fits the various pieces of information into the work where they best fit his developing argument. The period of Romuald's life about which Damian is writing - and therefore the extent of time through which the information has been remembered - is at some points quite clear and at others entirely obscure.[13]

This artificial patterning, however, does not entirely conceal the **geographical** origins of the material. As there is no evidence that the elderly Romuald used to chat discursively to his disciples about his younger days, nor any reason to believe that anybody before Damian had collected stories about him from various places, most of the information will have come to the author from religious associated with the communities that still existed in or near the places named in the work. Because Romuald stayed in some places for extended periods or repeatedly, there are a few monasteries whose names occur several times - Sant 'Apollinare in Classe, Biforco, Sitria, Val di Castro - and Damian may have derived the greater part of his information from brethren associated with those communities, with the remainder from one or two others, especially Fonte Avellana and San Vincenzo as the places of writing, and perhaps Santa Maria at Pomposa, where he had previously spent some time.[14] Indeed, because the **Life** proceeds in a roughly chronological order, certain clusters of stories concerning

particular places at particular times can be discerned in it. For example, in chapters 1 to 3 there are various stories about Romuald's early years at Sant 'Apollinare, and towards the end of the **Life** there are groups of stories from Sitria and from Val di Castro.

Stories from a single place, however, are not necessarily well integrated with each other, for not all the sources from which Damian constructed the biography were really biographical in any case. The monks who retained knowledge of Romuald were evidently not all eye-witnesses - Damian could not have believed that Romuald had first entered Sant 'Apollinare a hundred and fifteen years before the writing of the **Life** if they had been - and stories were told of him for a variety of reasons. In chapter 2, for example, where it is recorded that Romuald saw two apparitions of St. Apollinaris in the church at Sant 'Apollinare and thereafter never ceased to testify that the ancient martyr's relics were in that church, it is evident that the location of the relics had been of at least as much interest to those who had preserved the tale as Romuald had been. In such cases, Damian has probably had to find for himself the biographical significance in the material.

Deduction

All the stories he knew, moreover, did not add up to a complete Life, especially as to the earlier years. Frequently it is evident that Damian, following a common hagiographical practice, has deduced what he writes. In chapter 7, for example, he records in some detail the evil thoughts that the devil put into the young hermit's head to tempt him from his vocation, the phantasms that were held up to him and the bitter words with which he overcame the attack. There is no way

Damian could have known all this from an oral narrative unless Romuald had subsequently spoken of it (or the narrative at least supposed that he had), which is neither claimed nor implied. In fact the chapter is clearly assimilated to an already ancient **written** tradition of such attacks, especially to some points of St. Athanasius's famous **Life of Saint Antony**, and Damian's evidence that Romuald suffered this way too has probably been simply that this is a stage through which **any** such saint must pass.[15] At various points in the **Life**, reasoning **a priori** seems to replace historical evidence altogether. At first sight this seems to contradict Damian's self-protestations of truthfulness in his prologue:

> **Nonnulli enim Deo se deferre existimant, si in extollendis sanctorum virtutibus mendatium fingant ... Qui enim ultro oblatam simplicem veritatem referre facile poterant, in componendis que nesciunt, casso labore desudant ...**

It is clear from the sentences that precede this statement, however, that Damian is here talking of **miracles** and hagiographers who fabricate miracle stories simply dishonestly. He will not do that. Deduction of what must have happened at certain stages of the saint's spiritual progress, however, is quite different. Every Christian life is lived within the context of universal salvation history. The testimony of human witnesses is not required for those facts that are according to the necessary truths of religion.

Allegory, typology and theology

The same understanding of history that allowed Damian and other hagiographers to **deduce** certain points about their saints' spiritual journeys caused them also to interpret much of what they knew (both from stories and by deduction) with the aid of allegory, typology and theological principles. The life of a saint is, by its very

definition, no ordinary life but one that is **mirabilis**, charged throughout with the divine. Indeed, as the saint dwells in Christ and Christ in him, it is God Himself Who acts in the marvellous deeds of a **perfectus**. God changes never. What He does in the life of a holy man in Italy around the year 1000 will be consistent with what He is known to have done in the sacred history recorded for all generations in the sacred scriptures. Types that there prefigure Christ and His Church may prefigure also the **members** of Christ and of the Church in any time. The mysterious, non-literal significations of objects and events of the distant past may similarly be reflected in those of the more recent past, for all times are as the present to eternal, omniscient God. Theological principles taken from St. Paul, the Gospels or any of the Fathers - Christological, soteriological, eschatological, ecclesiological and so forth - may be applied to the interpretation of what He is about as He works through His agents in any time or place. The allegory, typology and theology discerned so universally in the scriptural past will therefore be applicable also to latter-day sainted lives, waiting only to be perceived. Hagiography is often replete with them.[16]

Many of the stories of the **Vita Beati Romualdi** are shaped accordingly.[18] However a story may have arisen and whatever it may have meant to those who told it orally, Damian will understand it by reference to the Bible or patristic works[17] and its form and content will be affected by this. In chapter 13, for example, when Romuald returns from the Pyrenees to Italy, to the great distress of the Pyrenean population who will thereby be deprived of the patronage of his holy presence, the account is studded with such significant details as a shaven head, the first light of day, insanely avid eating, a staff in the hand and bare feet, with an allusion to the

"spiritual David" and with such concepts as true and false witness, the (temporal) world, salvation and God the physician. In many such chapters there is virtually no "purely historical" information at all. Hagiography is, in this sense, infamously "unreliable".

2. MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Modern lives

These difficulties limit the use to which such texts are put. Henrietta Leyser has remarked that there is very little on Romuald in either English or French.[19] She might have added that there is not a vast amount in Italian either. In fact the most ambitious study made in the twentieth century is in German, Walter Franke's modern life of Romuald and assessment of his historical significance **Romuald von Camaldoli und seine Reformtatigkeit zur Zeit Ottos III,**[20] published as long ago as 1913. Although incautious at times and largely outdated by subsequent studies of many of the issues raised, this long, serious piece of scholarship remains the most important modern life of the saint. In 1927 the two other twentieth-century biographies were published, those of P. Ciampelli and A. Pagnani. Apparently motivated at least in part by reaction to Franke's critical methods, these tend to accept information from the mediaeval sources rather credulously and are not very useful. No full-length secondary work devoted primarily to Romuald has appeared since.

Other contributions

In 1957 a most valuable contribution was made at the primary level by the publication of Giovanni Tabacco's superb new edition for the **Fonti per la storia d'Italia** series. This attracted increased attention to

the **Life**, but only in the form of articles, chapters and brief mentions. Although the total volume of material on Romuald has remained modest, it has therefore come to be scattered through a large number of books and articles, often with titles that give no indication that Romuald is mentioned in them, and anyone who wishes to know what recent historians have been making of this saint **und seine Reformtatigkeit** must therefore hunt wide.

What will be found is very disparate. As Romuald is not the major focus of any more than a handful of articles, he has scarcely become the subject of debate. The historians who use the **Life** look at different parts of it from different angles to answer quite unrelated historical questions and rarely more than note each others' contributions. It is therefore impossible to piece together a coherent picture of Romuald from recent works. Some of those studies, moreover, draw on numerous (even hundreds of) other primary sources and betray only a very fragmentary knowledge or superficial understanding of Peter Damian's labour of love; the quality is highly variable.

Giovanni Tabacco, not surprisingly, made one of the most serious and least narrowly focused contributions in his article "Romualdo di Ravenna e gli inizi dell'eremitismo camaldolese". There is also his more specific article on the date of the foundation of Camaldoli. Among the other valuable contributions, the eminent Dom Jean Leclercq has an article on "Saint Romuald et le monachisme missionaire" (generally more convincing than the contribution a few years earlier of Valerien Meysztowicz, writing on "La vocation monastique d'Otton III"), as well as an excellent short section on Romuald and his school in his modern biography of Damian, **Saint Pierre Damien; ermite et**

homme d'Eglise.[21]

Concentrated use of the **Life** is also made in Anselmo Giabbani's articles on the primitive Camaldolese and on Damian and the **Rule** of St. Benedict, while John Howe, in his rather more recent (1983) article, "The Awesome Hermit: The Symbolic Significance of the Hermit as a Possible Research Perspective", has approached the text from an altogether different angle and suggested how such a hermit as Romuald might be studied as a socio-religious symbol.[22] Henrietta Leyser provides a good example of the less concentrated use of the work in her **Hermits and the New Monasticism**, a study of a historical question in which references to Romuald are scattered throughout. Many of the works listed in the bibliography are of this last kind.

Perhaps the most **unconvincing** use of the **Life**, on the other hand, is made by D. Weinstein and R.M. Bell in their **Saints and Society**, a study drawn from hundreds of saints living over seven hundred years. They mention it in relation to sexual temptations only, in which Damian in fact shows only the barest interest in the work. Weinstein and Bell, that is to say, are guilty of taking evidence out of context. Some weaknesses in more serious arguments by John Saward, presenting Romuald as one of his **Perfect Fools**, and G. Miccoli, in relation to Damian's monastic theology, will be suggested in the body of the thesis in the discussions on chapters 36 and 37.

3. THE PRESENT STUDY

Following on from Tabacco

The rationale of this thesis is the filling of a historiographical gap. If historians have not used the **Life** of Romuald to the full and have sometimes used it dubiously, it is probably because of such difficulties of hagiography as those alluded to above. When a good edition of such a text has been provided, historians still cannot make maximum use of it if they are uncertain of the status of the evidence it offers. Especially when there is little corroborative evidence, there needs to be an intermediary study of the text as a historical-literary construct, systematically examining it in detail right through for internal evidence as to its **own** history, the processes by which the various pieces of information, speculation and comment it comprises have come to make it just what it is. It ought then to be possible for historians to use it with more confidence.

The present study, therefore, starts from Tabacco's edition. Although as many as possible of the secondary works published since then are referred to in the notes at the appropriate places, and use is made of any relevant information they offer, this thesis is in principle historiographically anterior to them and dependent throughout directly on Tabacco. Tabacco's many and extensive notes are therefore assumed throughout. The information they contain is not repeated and attention is drawn to them only occasionally, mainly when some comment is added. His introductory study of the history of the manuscripts and early printed editions is likewise asumed (although it will be evident from this introduction that his opening comments on the nature and value of the text as a historical source are not accepted).

Form criticism and redaction criticism

The methods of analysis used to cope with the difficulties the text presents are adapted from the methods of form criticism and redaction criticism used particularly by Bible scholars. Although they were developed consecutively in the earlier half of this century, these two sets of analytical principles are in fact inseparable, redaction criticism having arisen to fill a gap initially left by form criticism. Although they have been thoroughly established in Bible scholarship for decades and no less an authority than Leclercq has recommended the application of form criticism to saints' **Lives**,[23] these methods have not been commonly adapted for mediaeval studies.

Form criticism proceeds from the premise that not only whole written works but also oral sources for them are shaped by the purposes for which they are used; form is determined by function. A miracle story, for example, told to demonstrate the efficacy of a saint's shrine, will be quite different from a record of the living saint's rebuke of a depredator of monastic property, perhaps recalled as a warning to subsequent troublemakers, and different again from an account of his fasting or his self-flagellation, which may be held up as a model to religious. In each case extraneous information will gradually be pruned in the telling, while some elaboration may occur at other points, until the story is pushed into the most economical and cogent form in which to make the intended point to the intended audience. So the major principle of form criticism is that each piece of information in a compilation gathered from disparate sources has a separate history and that its earlier form may continue to show even when it has been fitted into a new context by the author who has

written it down, perhaps to make a different point of his own. The value of reconstructing such previous forms, insofar as it is possible in each case to do it, is that it takes the reader back beyond the author. This is instructive in various ways.

Firstly, it allows the material presented by the author to be more reliably assessed for its historical value. Without form criticism, only a general assessment of an author as historian can be made and the accuracy of particular pericopes little more than guessed at. Form criticism may suggest that a given story was originally quite different from the author's adaptation of it or, alternatively, that he has been faithful to it.

Whether a story that has been faithfully followed, or one that has been reconstructed, is itself reliable can then be addressed separately. As the analysis moves from the text at hand further back to the very genesis of the information it inevitably becomes more speculative and hypothetical and often little can be claimed with conviction. Degrees of likelihood, however, can certainly emerge. The story of Romuald's death, for example, (in chapter 69) is told so simply and naturalistically - it resulted from gradual senile decay, with serious outpourings of phlegm, worsening breathlessness and progressive loss of strength - that it is almost certainly true to life. It was always a death story and originated in the facts. The story of how he came to his first hermit master and was disciplined by him (in chapter 4), on the other hand, referring to a period more than fifty years earlier, is built around details that resonate loudly with traditional associations - a ship, a rod, a right hand, **accidia** and so forth. Very little of this chapter's information can be confidently accepted as taken from life, even though it is not inherently

implausible, for its conclusion shows that it was told as an example of a model novice's humility and it appears to have been "built up" to do so.

The second advantage of form criticism is that it can provide a test for allegory and typology. Acknowledging the importance of the "spiritual exposition" of a variety of mediaeval texts, Beryl Smalley correctly commented, "It is an enticing ploy, since it cannot be proved that a writer did not intend any number of inner meanings in what he wrote".[24] However, if a story appears in a form in which it could cogently have been told orally to make an identifiable point to an identifiable audience, then the author probably accepted it as suitably meaningful as it stood and did not write inner meanings into it. It is when a story is weighed down with apparently extraneous minor details, or appears in an evidently contrived form in which it could not have readily circulated orally, or does not come directly to its point, that inner meanings may be looked for. Chapters 10 and 71 of Romuald's **Life** provide contrasting examples here. Chapter 71 tells, in four sentences, how a cow stolen from a poor woman by a rapacious bailiff was returned to her when the bailiff was struck dead in response to her entreating Romuald, in words and with an offering, at an oratory containing a relic of one of his saintly hairshirts. This reads as a straightforward miracle story and although its site was not the main shrine at Val di Castro, it is advertised in the previous chapter as an example of what was to be expected at that shrine. Chapter 10, on the other hand, takes eight sentences to tell - much more dramatically - of the death of a count who had stolen a cow from a **familiaris** of the young Romuald in the Pyrenees. The **familiaris**, begging Romuald for help, calls the cow "**spes sua et sue domus**", but the count kills it and is struck dead only afterwards.

The story therefore suffers from the acute narrative weakness that the besought restitution is not made in any way. The chapter is filled with words and details that suggest it has in fact been turned into an allegory built around the concept of **spes**.

Form criticism, thirdly, opens windows into the **milieux** in which holy men were remembered and what they meant for their earliest venerators. This may be of independent historical value. In chapter 2, for example, there is some evidence that the monks of Sant 'Apollinare in Classe suffered strained relations with the archbishop of Ravenna (who was possibly still their own abbot) and some of the lay nobility, although that is not exactly how Damian presents the matter.

Redaction criticism proceeds from the premise that the author of a Gospel, a **Life** or other such work will have shaped it according to his own interpretation of the evidence. The common assumption that such authors gathered stories, anecdotes and sayings eclectically as best they could and then wrote down everything they knew without much concern for any editing beyond the imposition of chronological order and the assimilation of some stories to earlier models that struck them as similar - which is roughly how Tabacco understood Romuald's **Life** even after editing it[25] - was never really supported by evidence. Redaction criticism holds that stories are frequently adapted by interpreting authors to make arguments for which they were not originally told. It is therefore, in relation to form criticism, simply the other side of the same coin (and in practical application no attempt is normally made to distinguish them). Its principal purpose is to elucidate the intentions of the final author, not just in general but piece by piece by analysing how he has redacted the various pericopes into their final written forms. This also can be

instructive in various ways.

First of all, the interpretations of the author that are thereby revealed may be of historical interest in their own right. This is especially so in the case of the **Life** of Romuald. Peter Damian is in many respects a more important historical figure than Romuald himself, both as a doer and a thinker. The **corpus** of his written work is extensive and is frequently studied by historians. The **Life** of Romuald may be taken as a key to the rest of it. It is his first major writing and the only one not written for a particular occasion or a narrow purpose. It expresses his religious values in the important years of early maturity that preceded his rise to eminence. Romuald, as Damian understood him, was his own model. The **Life** is therefore a standard against which the development of his thought and values and the course of his activity through his subsequent years may be tested. Historians of ideas have not generally done this[26], or made much use of the work at all, probably because they have had no method of distinguishing Damian's interpretations from his sources. Sometimes this must still be tentative, but despite that, once it has been accepted that an author has not copied down information unselectively and uncritically, the written form of each story, even when close to the oral form, can be taken as evidence of his own understanding of its significance. For this reason, redaction criticism offers insights into authors more secure than form criticism's insights into oral sources.

Redaction criticism, secondly, can offer a test of originality. It is well known that mediaeval saints' **Lives** are often assimilated to ancient models, such as St. Athanasius's **Life of Saint Antony** and Sulpicius Severus's **Life of Saint Martin.** Such imitation is generally

accepted at face value and implicitly regarded as a weakness in a **Life** as a historical source; if an event is copied from an ancient exemplar, it probably never happened. In fact, however, the similarities are often general while there may be differences of detail that are much more important than they appear to be, especially if allegory or typology is involved. The twentieth century places a premium on originality. The value of everything from a motorcar to a symphony to a ballgown to a thesis is assessed partly by whether it is original, and much effort is expended on the **simulation** of originality when the reality cannot be had. Because the early mediaeval attitude was exactly the reverse, at least as far as monasticism was concerned, every kind of novelty was suspect and every belief, every practice, every saint had to be authenticated by reference to the absolute authorities of the past, especially the Bible and the Fathers.[27] Hagiographers will therefore emphasise the similarities between their saints and earlier ones or Old Testament figures even when such similarities are only superficial, or even forced. Whole lives are presented as nothing more than the working out of various traditions even when they could be thought to be in fact remarkably original. Stories will therefore have been pushed into conformity with ancient exemplars as they were written down[28], but the points made by a hagiographer may really remain substantially different from those in the exemplars; there may be disguised originality. An example of this is chapter 16 of the present **Life**, discussed in the body of the thesis.

The form and scope of the analysis

The analysis in the present study takes the form of a threefold commentary. It begins with a kind of exegesis of the finished text to elucidate what Damian understood and meant to convey by what he wrote, especially where allegory and typology may be involved. It proceeds from this to an assessment of the sources he has drawn on, both oral stories about Romuald and written authorities on the religious life. Lastly, the information offered is evaluated for its literal historicity. This order is followed so that the study may progress from the surest ground to the least sure.

For convenience, the seventy-two chapters into which the **Life** is commonly divided are studied one at a time, but most of these are not historiographically homogeneous and are therefore subdivided into small sections that appear to have been derived from distinct sources. To preserve the order of the analysis, however, the subdividing is not immediately justified. First, as each small section is translated, its function in Damian's developing argument is considered separately, because this is most enlightening when done step by step in the author's order and because it is this that has governed the use of sources. The sources are not considered section by section at the same time but all together towards the end of each chapter, because a single source may have given rise to more than one section, interrupted by other information, deduction or author's exposition, in which case the sections cannot be studied separately in the order in which the author has used them. Evaluation of literal historicity is similarly made whole chapter by whole chapter.

The analysis is limited to these three aspects because it is made from

a historical point of view. Although the methods used are derived from a theological background and much of what Damian has to say is of a theological nature, and although such an analysis of a written text could be called a kind of literary criticism, no attempt will be made to evaluate the work as a piece of spiritual literature (as a theological study of it ought to do), to show how its lessons may be adapted to the advantage of the devotional life of the present day (as a theological study of it **might** do) or to study the use of the Latin language or of literary device **qua** literary device. Although the analysis has the form of a commentary it is therefore an incomplete commentary and yet more rigidly structured than most commentaries, so it is not called by that name.

The translation

Although historiographical analysis of the **Life** is the main function of the thesis, the text is also translated as it is studied. The reason for this is that the analysis requires the text to be cited in full, piece by piece. The alternatives to translation would be to incorporate the whole of Tabacco's edition, which would be both clumsy and of little use, or to subdivide the chapters remotely and invisibly by page and line numbering alone, which would require the reader to follow the analysis solely in a text where the subdivisions were not marked. The **Life** has not in any case hitherto existed in English.

Because the translation is not an end in itself, it is a close one. To translate is always to interpret but the freer the translation the greater the interpretation, and in the present study the intention is to follow Damian's wording as closely as possible and then interpret it separately in the analysis. The English rendering, for this

reason, may seem unnatural in places. For the Latin **conversatio**, for example, meaning "way of life", "conduct", "converted life", the now archaic direct Anglicisation "conversation" is given. This is necessary because the full monastic sense of **conversatio** cannot be adequately translated by any single English word or phrase, and the concept is so constant and important that it is not desirable to translate the word vaguely or differently in different contexts. Indeed, as it had become virtually a technical term in the ecclesiastical Latin, it is not really appropriate to attempt to translate it into everyday English in any case. As Professor Dodd commented in relation to St. Paul, "an archaic phrase suits a thoroughly archaic idea. To render it into the terms of ordinary intercourse is to bring the idea into a sphere to which it does not belong."[29] "Conversation", then, is a technical term throughout this study (the more common sense is avoided to prevent confusion). The same principle has been followed with **cogitatio** - "cogitation". **Virtus**, however, when meaning "miracle" or "power" or "lordship" or "estate" cannot be Anglicised as "virtue". It has therefore been necessary, although undesirable, to translate this very important word differently in different contexts. When it cannot be given as "virtue", a note is added to distinguish it from **miraculum, potestas, dominatio, praedium** and so forth. Damian appears to use **animus** throughout for the mind not so much in its rational function as the seat of the emotions. To distinguish it from **anima** - translated throughout as "soul", from **mens** - given as "mind", and from **spiritus** - naturally "spirit", **animus** is therefore translated as "heart". This inevitably causes an overlap with **cor**, which also appears a few times and must be given as "heart", but as rich as English vocabulary is, it seems to be one term short of Latin in this area (Damian uses other words again for "breast" and "bosom"). "Heart" therefore translates

both **animus** and **cor**, so a note is given in each case as to which it is.

NOTES

1. The best modern biography of Damian is Leclercq, **Pierre Damien.**
2. A summary of his studies and reasons for rejecting them can be found in A. Cantin, **Pierre Damien, Lettre sur la toute-puissance divine** No. 191 of Sources Chrétiennes (Paris, 1972), pp.19-20. On Damian's early years at Fonte Avellana,cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 20-22.
3. Damian's **Opuscula** 14 and 15, **De ordine eremitarum** and **De Suae congregationis institutis**, PL145, 327-364, amount to a written rule of life for Fonte Avellana. Cf. Blum, **Peter Damian**, p.11, Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 21-23, and Cantin, op.cit., pp. 19-20./ J. Howe,
4. "The Awesome Hermit: The Symbolic Significance of the Hermit as a Possible Research Perspective", in **Numen**, vol. 30., fasc. 1 (1983), pp. 115-16.
5. The earliest history of Fonte Avellana is by no means certain. As Cantin has noted, the belief that Romuald himself founded it about 992 is not supported by Damian, who fails to mention it in the VR. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 61-62, points out that Romuald was in any case more a guide than a superior and generally left his foundations "inorganique". Cantin, however, does not dispute that Romuald's observances were followed at Fonte Avellana; op.cit., p.15 n.1. A fuller introduction to Fonte Avellana can be had from G.M. Cacciamani, **Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques**, ed. A Baudrillart and others (Paris, 1912-).
6. Cf. Franke, p.4, Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 21-22.
7. Cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 22-23 and Meysztowicz, n.11 pp. 55-58.
8. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, op.cit., p.36 comments that his image of Romuald oriented all Damian's subsequent activity. Cf. also ibid., p.43.
9. "[P]recibus eius de quo loquimur, Deo opitulante" writes Damian in the last sentence of his prologue. Dom Jean Leclercq does not overstate the case when he writes, "A Romuald et a ses ermitages allait l'amour de Pierre Damien"; Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.164.
10. Damian himself was to become active in the reform of various categories of people, not just religious. Cf. Blum, **Peter Damian**, p.169, & Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.44.
11. See the abbreviations for bibliographical details. The Vfr. was written about 1008. It is not a **Life** of the still-living Romuald but briefly depicts his conduct in some particular circumstances. Cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.22.
12. Meysztowicz nn. 63-67, pp. 63-65, considers in detail the many dissimilarities between Bruno's and Damian's accounts in only a few chapters. (It must be admitted that at point 5, n.63, p.64, concerning John and Benedict's confession before martyrdom, Meysztowicz is incorrect. Cf. Vfr. c.13 p.731).
13. Franke briefly discussed this problem pp. 44-45. He nonetheless attempted to establish a chronology of Romuald's life, pp. 44-124, on the basis of very limited evidence.

14. Franke, pp. 4-6, identified Fonte Avellana, Santa Maria di Pomposa (more particularly Guy of Pomposa) and San Vincenzo as Damian's sources. The first two of these foundations, however, are not mentioned in the **Life.** San Vincenzo is clearly the scene of four chapters (43, 44, 48 & 51). Leclercq, **Pierre Damien,** p.21, and Cantin, op.cit., p.21, briefly discuss Damian's scholarship and possible writing at Pomposa, where he spent a two-year sojourn away from Fonte Avellana.
15. Cf. B. Ward, **Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event, 100-1215** (London, 1982), p.168.
16. Ibid., p.169.
17. In Op.14, **De ordine eremitarum,** PL145, 334CD, he recommends reading from the following works, in addition to the Bible, as fundamental to the understanding of eremitism: "Ex passionibus quoque beatorum martyrum; ex homiliis sanctorum Patrum; ex commentariis, allegoricas sacrae Scripturae sententias exponentium, Gregorii scilicet, Ambrosii, Augustini, Hieronymi, Prosperi, Bedae, Remigii, etiam et Amalarii, insuper et Haimonis, atque Paschasii ... ut in sacrae disciplinae studiis intelligentiae vobis aditum panderemus." It is only natural that works of these kinds influenced his own understanding and presentation of the life of Romuald. Blum, **Peter Damian,** pp. 58-61, credits also to Fonte Avellana the **Vita Sancti Martini** of Sulpicius Severus and a list of other Christian works and pagan classics.
18. As indeed with almost all his works. Cf. Blum, **Peter Damian,** p.8 n.27 & p.38.
19. **Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe 1000-1150** (London, 1984), p.122.
20. Full details of the works mentioned here can be found in the bibliography.
21. Section 2 of chapter 1. Other works by Leclercq are also important for understanding the religious vocabulary used in the **Life** and the general spiritual milieu.
22. This suggestion will not be followed in the present thesis because of the difficulty of getting past Damian to the "historical Romuald" to whom Howe is apparently referring. Such a study might yet be made.
23. J. Leclercq, tr. C. Misrahi, **The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture** (London, 1974), p.206. It is perhaps odd that Leclercq, in a book apparently intended for a fairly general readership, neither explains what form criticism is nor gives any references to where the reader might find out.
24. **The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages** (Oxford, 1983), p.ix.
25. Cf. Tabacco, **Romualdo,** p.73 n.3. Criticising Leclercq, **Pierre Damien,** pp.22, 24, 34 & 35, for over-emphasising the mysterious quality of Romuald's life and understanding the VR as above all representing Damian's own monastic programme, Tabacco points out the comparatively short intervals between the saint's death, the author's own monastic conversion and the date of writing, and argues: "Pier Damiani .. certo, ebbe una personalità così potente, da far nascere il dubbio su ogni sua testimonianza, quando concerna temi spirituali che impegnarono la sua intelligenza, ma altrettanto potente fu la personalità di Romualdo, con una vita così ricca di avvenimenti, da non consentire al narratore, di cui e incontestabile il proposito di far conoscere cose e fatti prima ancora che idee, di soffocarne l'originalità." All such arguments proceed from an

anachronistic assumption that a mediaeval hagiographer, like a modern biographer, could produce a naturalistic portrait of a personality and purely literal records of events distinguishable from his presentation of ideas.

26. Blum, for example, **Peter Damian**, pp. 72-3, commented that there is no overall plan or design in Damian's corpus of writing about the spiritual life, but rather a mass of works about almost every phase of ascetism, often defying synthesis. He demonstrated that Damian regarded his spirituality as true to the Benedictine tradition even while he was influenced by St. Romuald towards a rigorous and individualistic spirituality whose compatibility with Benedict's is highly questionable; and yet Blum, following his attempt to find a definite system in Damian's spiritual writings, shows negligible use of the VR.
27. Cf. Leyser, op.cit., p.86.
28. Cf. Ward, op.cit., p.168.
29. C.H. Dodd, **The Epistle of Paul to the Romans** (London, 1959), p.47.

PROLOGUE TO THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED ROMUALD[1]

Against you, foul world, we unqualifiedly protest that you have an intolerable crowd of foolish sages [who] for **you** are voluble, [but] about **God**, dumb. You have those who, through vain eloquence and inane philosophy, are skilled in arrogantly extolling themselves on the horns of pride; you do not have [a man] willing to note anything down on [written] pages as a record [that] will be advantageous for the edification of future generations of [his] neighbours. You have, I say, those who can plead the lawsuits and brawling cases of the affairs of [this] world with ceaseless declamation in the halls of justice; but you do not have [a man] able to describe the marvellous powers[2] and bright deeds of even one of the saints in holy Church. Wise to do evil as they are, they do not even know how to do good. For see, almost fifteen years have now passed since the blessed Romuald lay aside the burden of the flesh [and] departed to the ethereal realms, and not one thus far of the wise [men] of this kind has there been who would disseminate with the historian's pen even a few of the so many glories of his wondrous life, and satisfy the most eager devotion of the faithful by presenting for the common benefit of holy Church [records] to be read aloud from the lectern. It would be more advantageous for us, let it be said, as we dwell in the narrow corner of [our] little cell, to recall continually to [our] mind's eye our own sins, as has been our purpose, than to compose the history of another's virtue. It would be more expedient to lament the darkness of wrongs committed than to darken the shining insignia of sanctity with unskilful words. But yet, as a multitude of the faithful gathers at his sepulchre from the farthest parts of the earth throughout the year, and especially on [the occasion of] his feast, sees with admiration the miracles divinely worked through him [and] asks longingly to hear the history of his life - which, because it does not exist, it cannot, however, hear - it is not without reason that we gravely fear lest his most celebrated fame, which until now has been told abroad by the mouth of the whole people, may in the fleeting course of time be blotted entirely from human memory.

And so, compelled by this fear and the prayers of many brethren and bound by [their] sincere love, I shall undertake, supported by God[3], to copy down what I have learnt about the aforesaid wondrous man from his eminent disciples, and I shall attempt, [although] undoubtedly an unskilful man, to write down the beginning, the course and the end of his life, not composing a history but making something of a brief memorandum with whatever literary ornaments [I can]. And this one thing I wish my reader to know from the outset, that I shall not collect many [of the] miracles worked through him in this little description, but shall rather strive to tell of what leads to edification in every way - the order of his conversation. The blessed man in fact protected himself from the wind of vainglory in the shelter of humility so thoroughly that he suppressed whatever could seem marvellous to human eyes, most studious about [his] secrecy. Even if he had worked no miracles at all, however, he would be worthy of no less veneration [for] leading a marvellous life. For it is not read of even the forerunner of the Lord that he worked miracles, [yet] Truth itself bears witness that no one greater has arisen [from] among the children of women. No small number [of men] think that they honour God if they lie in extolling the powers[4] of the saints. Ignorant [as] they truly [are] that God has no need of our lies, [they] abandon the truth, which is [God] Himself, [and] imagine they

are able to please him by [their] fabrication of falsehoods. Jeremiah refutes them well: "They have taught their tongues to speak lies; they weary themselves to commit iniquity." For they who could easily tell the simple truth [that is] voluntarily offered [to them], exert themselves to fruitless toil in concocting what they do not know, and whereas they reckon themselves to stand for God as though [they are His] helpers, they in fact fight stubbornly against God as false witnesses to Him, as the apostle [Paul] attests to the Corinthians [when] he says, "If Christ is not risen, our preaching is in vain, your faith is in vain"; then adds, "We are found [to be] false witnesses to God, because we have spoken testimony against God that He has raised Christ, Whom He has not raised." But as we have prefixed these [words] as though in anger [because] we have been forced to write by necessity, let us now come, with prayers to him of whom we speak [and] with the help of God, to the sequence of the narrative.

NOTES

1. A study of the significance of this prologue in relation to Damian can be found in Leclercq, Pierre Damien, pp.24-25.
2. Virtutes: virtues, miracles, spiritual powers.
3. Or "at God's instance", or "thanks to God" (with connotations of sanction or approval); Deo auctore.
4. Or "miracles"; virtutes.

HERE BEGINS THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED ROMUALD,

ABBOT AND HERMIT.

CHAPTER 1 ROMUALD'S RELIGIOUS VOCATION

The opening chapter may be divided into four sections derived from four distinct origins: (i) the first sentence, identifying Romuald by his city and the status of his family; (ii) the remainder of the first paragraph, describing his youthful spiritual status; (iii) the second paragraph, except for the last sentence, relating Romuald's breach with his father over the father's murder of a relative; (iv) the last sentence, recording Romuald's temporary entry to Sant' Apollinare in Classe in penitence for this.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald, nobleman of Ravenna.

The first sentence opens the work with a simple and traditional definition of the future saint in terms of his city and his family:

> Romuald, then, sprung from the city of Ravenna, was descended from a most illustrious lineage of dukes.[1]

Such an opening, as Tabacco notes[2], is in accordance with a common hagiographical model. Tabacco traces this into antiquity, as far as St. Athanasius's **Life of Saint Antony.** Such identifications, however, did not originate with saint's **Lives.** The supreme model of characterisation by city and lineage is that of Jesus of Nazareth Himself, of the royal house of David. This characterisation by origins helps, in Christ's case, to establish and prove His status and function in universal salvation history. In the words of Gabriel, "**dabit illi Dominus Deus sedem David patris eius, et regnabit super domum Iacob in aeternum, et regni eius non erit finis.**"[3]

Clearly the new King will not merely replace His ancestor; He will be

of a different order, a fulfilment of the promise seen in the precursor. In his one brief sentence on Romuald's origins, Damian follows the tradition to the minimum degree, but it is sufficient to establish the **first** fact of Romuald's identity; by the time he is crowned in Heaven and an altar has been built to preserve the patronage of his relics at the end of the **Life**, he will be more truly an **illustrissimus dux** than any of his ancestors.[4]

The first story of his life shows that he is created for this. Even before his conversion to the religious life, while he lives yet like a worldly **dux**, his true nature shines through as he responds, in anticipation, to the call for which Heaven is preparing him:

(ii) Romuald's youthful ambivalence.

> When, in time, he reached adolescence, he began a decadent existence in the sin of the flesh[5], by which vice men are indeed commonly attacked so forecefully at that age - especially the rich. [6] And yet [he was] devoted in mind to God, [and] used frequently to attempt to arouse himself and set himself to do something great. For even when he would equip himself for the pastime of hunting, his heart[7] would blaze into longing for the hermitage as soon as he could find an attractive place anywhere in the woods [and] he would say to himself, "Oh, how well hermits can live in these forest retreats, how fittingly they may rest[8] here from all the commotion of the din of the world!" And thus his mind, inspired from Heaven, divined in love[9] what he would later fulfil in deed.

Thus the life story begins with a passage full of the terminology and imagery of mediaeval contemplative religion. The first characteristic of Romuald's life in the world is the fundamental conflict between **caro** and **mens - in peccato carnis** but **mente Deo devotus** - that is the internal manifestation in men of the conflict between God and world with which Damian has opened the prologue. Treated of in the New Testament itself, this had underlain the whole history of Christian asceticism[10] and Romuald's entire life will develop as a resolution of

it. Damian, however, does not go on to introduce the saint as a victorious ascetic who will struggle until he defeats the flesh but instead presents him as an embryonic hermit in search of a quiet life. To the dichotomy of flesh and mind is thus juxtaposed immediately that of world and desert place, with their contrasting characteristics of uproar and rest. For **caro**, in its theological sense[11], is not only, or even principally, men's literal flesh, but the principle of fallen humanity existing in the fallen world, that disordered realm in which the devil has overthrown the prelapsarian order of Creation. To overcome the flesh is therefore no mere matter of subduing the lusts of the body. Contemplative Christians removed themselves physically from the **seculum** of fallen humanity in pursuit of restoration to the perfection God wills for men. The desired reward was rest in the celestial peace of divine order. Dead to the world, a contemplative would hope to live as though already in Heaven. It is no coincidence that the same word **quiescere** - to take rest - is used here of Romuald's desire for the hermitage and again in chapter 69 for his death.[12]

This opening fairly introduces the **Life** that will follow. Romuald will be an ascetic master and there will be chapters devoted to his fasting, his mortifications, his victories over demons, but these will not be numerous and they will not dominate the work. Romuald's prime function in this **Life** is not to ensure his own salvation but, once restored to perfection in the hermitages, to become a fountain of divine peace in the demonic confusion of the world so that, through his **magisterium**, religious foundations, preaching and miracles, the restorative power of God will flow out, in chapter after chapter, towards the salvation of the fallen humanity around him. The peaceful rest of the hermitage turns out to be a great power[13], and Damian

unequivocally establishes here, at the very outset of the work, that there will be nothing incidental about this holy man's eremitism; his will be a sanctity **of the hermitage.** Love - **amor** - is the motivating force in the Christian soul that moves it towards its teleological rest in God. The **amor** that Heaven breathes into young Romuald, the **desiderium** of his heart, is eremitical.

The forest that is the setting for this primary yearning is probably not brought into the picture here only because Romuald will indeed spend some of his eremitical future in silvan retreats; both traditionally and in this **Life** such places are by no means the only kind of hermitage site. It is probably equally significant that Old Testament wood-dwellers could be interpreted as prefiguring ascetic hermits[14], and that the forest provided a suitable context for the introduction of hunting, that rich traditional symbol of worldliness associated with such highly symbolic Old Testament figures as Nimrod[15] and Esau[16] as well as with the contemporary wealth and violence of the noble warrior class to which young Romuald belonged. Damian's Romuald is both a historical person and a representative of a whole, ongoing class of Christians. In the forest yearning, therefore, Damian both foreshadows Romuald's personal conversion and begins to set it in the context of the universal salvation history of which it is a part and from which it derives its significance for others.

(iii) Disinheritance from the murderous father.

> [Romuald's] father, named Sergius, was vigorously occupied with the world and entirely enveloped in secular affairs. As he was conducting hostilities against one of his kinsmen[17] in a feud that had arisen over the occupancy of an inheritance[18] [and] he saw that his son Romuald was softening in the dispute and was terrified to [his] very marrow of the crime of fratricide, [Sergius] began to threaten to disinherit [him] should he continue in this state of mind any longer. What more [need I

> say]? Eventually the two parties of enemies tore from the city to the subject of the quarrel, seized [their] arms [and] joined in civil war. And as it was being fought, hand to hand, backwards and forwards, the enemy was suddenly killed by Sergius's [own] hand.

Here again, major religious symbols are embedded in the narrative. Of first importance is that the father's sin is a kind of fratricide. This is the sin of Cain against Abel, the first sin in history after original sin[19], and, suitably enough for the present context, the archetypal crime of worldliness: "**Primus itaque fuit terrenae civitatis conditor** [Cain] **fratricida**", notes St. Augustine in the **City of God.**[20] When Sergius threatens to disinherit Romuald, the implication is of disinheritance also from this sinful existence **in peccato carnis** whose legacy he in fact **must** renounce if he is to become an heir to the inheritance of the sons of God - which is eternal life.[21]

In this characterisation of Romuald's family, furthermore, there is perhaps an implicit characterisation, by contrast, of the religion to which, in penitence for his father's sin, he is about to retire for the first time; worldly life, destructive of the neighbour, will give place to a life in which Romuald will become a channel of redemption to his neighbours.

(iv) Penitence at Sant 'Apollinare.

> And so Romuald, although he had inflicted no wound on the [man who had been] cut down, undertook penance for this so very great sin because he had nevertheless been present, and hurried at once to the monastery of the blessed Apollinaris at Classe to remain forty days in mourning, according to the custom of homicides.

Thus Romuald is brought where he can be called to religion permanently by St. Apollinaris himself in the next chapter.

Damian's sources

The four sections into which the chapter has been divided above are of four different kinds, with no unifying thread but the introductory purpose to which they have been put.

Romuald's generation by a noble house of Ravenna is a straightforward and minimal statement of fact. Although attempts to trace Romuald's genealogy, summarised by Tabacco, have not been very productive, the family was presumably well known around Ravenna and Damian may have heard of it outside as well as within monastic circles.

The preliminary conversion story of Romuald's anticipatory yearning for the hermitage is a story without an event in it - scarcely a story at all - so thoroughly introductory in nature that it could hardly have circulated independently. As it is built virtually entirely around words, symbols and concepts already ancient in the tradition of ascetic literature and could fulfil no function but an edifying one, it is likely to have come into existence entirely within a monastic **milieu**, prefixed either to the story that now follows it or to some other. It is not, however, well integrated with the following story - neither Romuald's fear of fratricide nor his intended temporary retirement to the great **coenobium** of Sant 'Apollinare is made dependent on it - or with any other story in the **Life**. It is therefore quite likely to be in fact entirely of Damian's own composition. Because Damian's Romuald is less a personality than a model figure,[22] this story of young Romuald has probably been created by the combination of an image of a typical young nobleman with a typical hermitage site. The doctrine of predestination would have allowed Damian to do this honestly; whatever any future saint may be

in youth, there is sanctity latent in him. It is, at any rate, a suspect story.[23]

The story concerning Sergius and penitence at Sant 'Apollinare seems much more likely to have been based on the monastic communal memory, and it is commonly repeated in modern accounts of Romuald. The problem here, however, is that if the final sentence of the chapter, concerning the actual entry to Sant 'Apollinare, is set aside from the murder story proper, as it has been above, then the murder story still stands, complete enough in itself, as the record of a crime committed by Sergius. Although Romuald is brought into it by the threat of disinheritance, he is really superfluous in these sentences of the third section. Sergius later reappears in Chapters 12 to 14, having made an unexplained conversion at the monastery of San Severo, which was also at Classe, there to be disciplined by Romuald out of his reluctance to remain and into a death whose holiness is proven by an apparition, shortly beforehand, of the very Holy Spirit Himself. It is clear, therefore, that Sergius was remembered by monastic Ravenna not only as Romuald's father but also as something of a remarkable convert himself, and it may be suspected that the murder story was originally told not in relation to his son's conversion but his own. The story provides no evidence, however, whether the connection with Romuald was made by Damian himself or whether he recorded just what he heard.

If this evaluation of the murder story is correct, then the final sentence of the chapter, recording the forty days' penitence, has come into existence by surmise, arising from a knowledge of canon law. The next chapter includes a permanent conversion story, in which Romuald is called to lifelong religion by apparitions of St. Apollinaris

himself within the church enshrining his relics. This story requires Romuald to have been at Sant 'Apollinare on two successive nights (to see the apparitions) but not yet to have made his conversion. As forty days' penitence neatly explains this presence also, any such surmise could be taken as confirmed. There is again no internal evidence as to whether Damian may have made such a surmise himself or recorded just what he heard, but the extent of his own knowledge of the canons, which modern study has shown to be considerable,[24] might suggest the latter.

Literal historicity

There is evidence in the next chapter that Sant 'Apollinare at the time of Romuald's entry regarded Sergius as its own enemy, and that, far from being estranged from his father, Romuald was initially regarded as an enemy too and was pushed onto the reluctant monastery by an exercise of power. Although it is not unrealistic for its period and is probably broadly true, the story Damian heard of Sergius may well have been biased against him.

It could not have been known (other than by deduction) that young Romuald desired the hermitage in advance unless he subsequently said so. Damian does not claim that he did and, as such desire was generally understood (as Damian presents it) to be prompted by inspiration, to have done so would have been spiritually to boast; this seems unlikely. Damian shows no convincing sign, here or elsewhere, of really knowing anything about Romuald's life or character before his monastic conversion.

NOTES

1. Franke dated the birth to 951 or 952. This, however, depends on his dating of Romuald's entry to Sant 'Apollinare (cf. c.2n.23) and acceptance of Damian's statement that Romuald was then twenty (cf. c.69 section (iv)). This dating is therefore hypothesis upon hypothesis.
2. VR p.13n.1.
3. **Luke** 1:32-33.
4. St. Odilo's ancestry, by contrast, is insufficiently glorious and Damian has to draw out the conclusion explicitly: "ex equestri quidem ordine genus duxit, sed terrenae prosapiae lineam coelestis vitae nobilitate transcendit"; PL144, 927A.
5. In peccato carnis.
6. This comment may be autobiographically inspired. Cf. Cantin, p.17.
7. Animus.
8. Quiescere.
9. Blum, **Peter Damian**, p.74, points out that in **Sermo** 17, PL144, 601B, Damian argues that conversions begin when sanctus amor lights the fire of desire for the Creator. This seems to fulfil the function of prevenient grace.
10. It originates with St. Paul, **Romans** 7:25, whose phraseology Damian here echoes (albeit not verbatim).
11. Explained by Paul, with the reasons for mortification of the flesh, in **Romans** 8. Cf. also **Galatians** 5:16-24.
12. On the concepts of quies and requies and their rich associations, since antiquity, with repose (earthly and eschatalogical), peace, wisdom, desire for God, contemplation, the sabbath (participation in God's own repose), perfection, the promised land, etc., cf. J. Leclercq, **Otia monastica: Etudes sur le vocabulaire de la contemplation au moyen âge**, being **Studia Anselmiana**, 51 (Rome, 1963), pp.13-26 and 66-82. Leclercq, pp.25-6, draws special attention to the formula of St. Gregory the Great, "Ipsa tranquillitate quietis suae in mundo extra mundo est"; from **Moralia in Iob**, 22, 35 (PL76, 234A); and to Damian's own statement, "Sicut enim sacerdotis est proprium sacrificiis offerendis insistere, doctoris est praedicare, ita nihilominus eremitae officium est in ieiunio silentioque quiescere"; Op. 15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, PL145, 339D. Damian treats of requies in relation to virtually the entire Christian life in Ep. 8, 5, PL144, 260B-270A. Cf. also Ep. 6, 5, PL144, 381C & Ep. 6, 32, PL144, 425A.
13. It was traditionally denied that quies and requies implied quietism; cf. Leclercq, **Otia monastic**, op.cit., pp.20-24.
14. Cf. Op. 13, **De perfectione monachorum**, PL145, 295CD, and Brezzi and Nardi, p.216: "Iosue filios Ioseph ... 'Si populus, inquit, multus es, ascende in silvam, et succide tibi spatia in terra Pherezaei, et Rephaim, quia angusta est tibi possessio montis Ephraim'. [**Joshua** 17:15]. Nam ... in angusta se montis Ephraim possessione cohibuit, qui sola B. Benedicti regula contentus esse decrevit ... quoniam angustam hic possessionem esse perpendit, mox ad altiora, simul et latiora transmittit: 'Caeterum qui festinant, inquit, ad perfectionem, sunt doctrinae sanctorum, sive collationes et instituta Patrum' [**Ben. Reg.** C.73]", etc.
15. Quintessential Scriptural hunter and "worldly-great" man; cf. **Genesis** 10:8-10.
16. Esau the hunter is used by Damian as the symbol of "vagabundi

monachi" or lovers of the external, in contrast to the followers of Jacob, the interior-oriented tabernacle-dweller. Cf. Op. 12, **De contemptu saeculi**, PL145, 272D-274C. It may also be significant that in **Genesis** 36 each of the sons of Esau is called "dux".

17. Quendam propinquum.

18. Or "meadow" - "prati" rather than "partis"; cf. VR. p.14n.(r). "Meadow" offers a richer sense. It was to a field that Cain took Abel to commit fratricide [**Genesis** 4:8] and it is again in terms of worldliness that Damian interprets pratum elsewhere: "'Iter nobis erat per pratum'; quid per pratum, quod 'ager' dicitur, nisi mundus hic designatur? Recte ergo non mansisse in prato, sed iter habuisse per pratum dicitur, qui Dominum sequebatur..." **Expositio visionum SS. Martyrum Mariani et Iacobi**, PL144, 1033B. In either case, it is no doubt significant that they were fighting over a landed possession, mark of the nobilis.

19. It appears in Genesis 4; the sin of Adam in **Genesis** 3. Jean Danielou notes and comments on this in relation to the fundamental ascetic theme of Paradise to be restored: tr. W. Hibberd, **From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers** (London, 1960), p.13. Romuald is a representative of Paradise in C.45 of the VR.

20. **Civitas Dei**, 15, 5, CSEL, 48, p.457. Augustine continues on to link this with the example of Romulus and Remus, which is used elsewhere by Damian in opposition to monastic charity (Brezzi and Nardi, Op. 13, pp.330 - 331).

21. Cf. Matthew 19:29: "Et omnis qui reliquerit domum, vel ... patrem ... aut agros, propter nomen meum ... vitam aeternam possidebit." Damian addresses the cell as "Felices nundinae, ubi ... possessio terrena distrahitur, et ad aeternae haereditatis patrimonium pervenitur"; Op. 11, **Liber qui dicitur Dominus vobiscum**, PL145, 247BC. Antony renounces his inheritance (his parents already dead), **Vita Antonii** C.3. There is a further allusion to this theme in C.38 below.

22. Cf. introduction n.25.

23. Often the birth or youth of a saint, as of Christ, was attended by a marvellous sign. Cf. **Vita S. Odilonis**, PL144, 927. Romuald's early call is comparatively unremarkable. Youthful desire afterwards fulfilled is also bound in Sulpicius Severus, **Life of St. Martin**, 2, 4. More generally, cf. Ward, op.cit., p.169.

24. Cf. Cantin, op.cit., p.17, and more especially J.J. Ryan, **Saint Peter Damian and his Canonical Sources: A Preliminary study in the Antecedents of the Gregorian Reform**, being No. 2 of Studies and Texts of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies (Toronto, 1956).

CHAPTER 2 ROMUALD'S CONVERSION TO THE MONASTIC LIFE IS EFFECTED

Four divisions may be made in this chapter: (i) the first and second paragraphs, in which the question of whether Romuald should remain permanently in the monastery is answered by two apparitions of the great martyr of Ravenna, St. Apollinaris himself; (ii) the first two sentences of the final paragraph (to p.18 l.18), where he is granted the gift of compunction; (iii) the remainder of the final paragraph, except for the last sentence, where he is forced on the reluctant brethren by the archbishop of the city; (iv) the last sentence, noting the duration of his stay.

Damian's argument

(i) Visions of St. Apollinaris.

> Now [as he] mortified himself there with continuous, severe penance, he began to engage in discussion each day with a certain [monk, an adult] convert,[1] and from [this man] he would often listen to good, encouraging advice - in proportion to [his] limited understanding. As [this] convert used to admonish him frequently to discard secular life altogether and come quickly into the order of holy conversation, but he could not humble his mind to [do] this at all, [the monk] one day, while otherwise apparently congratulating [him], brought up [the subject by] saying, "If I were to show you the blessed Apollinaris in [his] bodily appearance, such that you would be able to see him plainly, what would I get from you for a reward?" To this Romuald [replied], "I bind myself with a firm and inviolable promise that as soon as I see the blessed martyr, I will remain with the world no longer." The convert therefore encouraged Romuald to put off going to sleep that night and, together with himself, to watch in prayer in the church. And as the two persisted patiently in prayer in the silence of the night, lo, at about cock-crow, the blessed Apollinaris, watched clearly by these two, came out from under the altar that is to be seen in the middle of the church [where it] has been erected to the honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was seen, in fact, to come out from the eastern part, from that point, to be precise, where the purple marble is laid. And such great brilliance immediately filled the church throughout [that it was] as if the sun confined [all] the rays of his glory within those walls. Then the most blessed martyr, adorned wondrously in priestly fillets and bearing a golden censer in his hand, cast incense on all the altars of the church,[2] and [when he had]

> done this he returned directly [to the place] from which he had come, and all the brilliance [that] attended him immediately ceased to be seen.
>
> And so the convert, [who was] certainly a tough collector of Romuald's [debt], began to insist vehemently and demand troublesomely that he fulfil the promise that he, of his own accord, had made. And as Romuald still resisted and pressed to see the same vision again, they persisted in the same way in prayer on another night and they saw the blessed martyr just the same in every way as they had before. As a result of this, if ever a question subsequently arose at any time about the body of the aforesaid martyr, Romuald would affirm utterly that it was reserved in that church, and for as long as the sainted man lived, he did not cease to pronounce this testimony.

As St. Apollinaris reveals himself here in celestial state, he reveals also to Romuald - **and** the reader of the **Life** - something of the nature of the religious life. Most characteristic of Damian is the sharp contrast between humility and glory[3], Romuald's readiness to humble himself in worldly terms being achieved by this apparition of true glory, expressed in terms reminiscent of the apocalyptic glory of Christ[4], of His Transfiguration[5], and of the glory of the sons of the Kingdom as described by Him in the parable of the weeds.[6]

The numerous fine details of the apparition are pregnant with symbolic meanings. The censer is a traditional symbol of the passion of Christ[7], and it appears in the **Apocalypse** as the dispenser of the prayers of the saints.[8] The altar is associated with it in the one case as the site of the re-enactment of the passion (in the Eucharist), and in the Apocalypse as the site of the offering of the incense itself before the throne of God in His majesty.[9] All this is immediately appropriate in the present context through the further connections that exist between the Passion of Christ and that of His servant the martyred Apollinaris, and between both these sacrifices and the life of prayer undertaken by the "confessor" saints, held to be martyrs **in voto**, such as Romuald is to become.[10] The priestly

vestments in which this martyr is adorned represent the righteousness and celestial **conversatio** of such saints[11], and perhaps, through the common metaphorical association of vestments with the human body and the association of priests with sacrifice, they represent also the sanctified body of the martyr.[12] Romuald, like Peter, is recalled to Christ at cock-crow, the very dawning, after the night of betrayal, of the day of passion.[13] St. Apollinaris thus appears as an emblem of the sanctity to which he is calling Romuald.

(ii) Compunction.

> Now Romuald had the custom of casting himself down frequently in prayer before the principal altar of the church, and there, after the brethren withdrew, he would put himself to entreating God with many groans.[14] And as he was doing this, very attentively, on a certain day after [his] vision, the Holy Spirit thereupon lit his mind with so great a fire of divine love that he suddenly broke out [and] wept, unable to restrain the rivers of [his tears]. He threw himself prostrate at the feet of the monks and begged with unwavering desire that a monastic habit be given him.

The theme of compunction, the achievement of true penitence, evidenced by the gift of tears, is developed here out of the themes of prayer and the altar in the earlier half of the chapter. Damian does not develop it very far, probably because Romuald is still only in the most preliminary stages of religion, but tearful compunction is frequently associated in monastic literature - as are other rivers and waters of various kinds - with baptism, and more significantly for the present sentences with the "second baptism" which conversion to monasticism, regarded as the fulness of the Christian life, was so often held to be.[15] The association with prayer and penitence is clearly made.[16] Thus Romuald's latent **amor** of the opening chapter and his new-found humility take effect, in response to St. Apollinaris's highly symbolic call, in a model conversion that epitomises in a few

sentences the monastic **conversatio** that is to be his path to sanctification.

What Damian sets out to convey in the closing sections of the chapter is quite straightforward:

(iii) Archiepiscopal patronage.

> But the monks, because they were afraid of the toughness of his father, did not presume to clear his admission to conversion. Honest, however, who then occupied the archiepiscopal throne of Ravenna, had once been abbot of [this] community of Classe. Romuald therefore went earnestly to this [man] and disclosed all his heart's[17] desire to him. [Honest] became enthusiastic [and] goaded [him] on, encouraging [him] in [this] innocent concupiscence. He ordered the brethren to receive him into their company without delay. And so, propped up by the patronage of [this] member of the community, they accepted Romuald with calm composure and gave him the habit of holy conversation.

(iv) The duration of his stay at Sant 'Apollinare.

> And in that monastery he passed about three years.

Damian's sources

The first two sections into which the chapter has been divided offer two different conversion stories that have not been fully integrated; for Romuald's compunction at the altar takes place an indefinite period after the visions that were supposed to convince him as to the whereabouts of St. Apollinaris's relics. Indeed, as it is scarcely suggested that the older monk conjured up the martyr's spectre and yet he knew when and where the apparition would be visible, not once but twice, it may be inferred that he knew St. Apollinaris made these appearances regularly. Both these points suggest that the story was originally told not to explain Romuald's conversion but to

authenticate the relics, the later saint witnessing to the earlier. Indeed, the central section of it, where the apparition is described, could authenticate the relics without reference to Romuald.

It does not seem possible, however, that Damian has himself converted the story to its new function. He could not have simply deduced that Romuald had made a conversion pact over the vision with the senior monk who was supervising him. Presumably, therefore, the story had already developed its dual function at Sant 'Apollinare before Damian heard it. St. Benedict had prescribed[18] that the new convert, at the end of his noviciate, make his vows in a written petition that would invoke the names of the saints whose relics were present, leaving it on the altar to be taken from there by the abbot. In Romuald's case, the saint whose relics are present is guaranteeing the vocation in advance (there is no story concerning a written petition) and this may explain how the relic story became a conversion story. As Romuald was later to become abbot of Sant 'Apollinare and there is no evidence that he ever formally ceased to be a member of that community, he was in a sense always a Sant 'Apollinare saint and the story of Apollinaris himself calling the future abbot of his house to conversion before his own relics in his own church would have seemed particularly appropriate there.[19]

The second story is more plausible but its status as historical evidence is unclear. Falling at the feet of the monks assembled in the oratory, to ask for acceptance into their community, and there and then being undressed and re-dressed in the monastic habit, is prescribed by Benedict as part of the same ritual as that in which the petition was to be made. It is therefore just as likely that Damian or his source has assumed this of Romuald as that a story circulated

in memory of it. Either Damian or his source has found it unsatisfactory to record it as mere ritual and has prefixed the solitary groans, which, by the nature of their setting, were unwitnessed, and the rivers of tears, which evidently at least began similarly unwitnessed.

The concluding story, concerning Romuald so much more peculiarly, would seem to be based more firmly in oral accounts, although still not without evidence of its redaction by Damian. The principal interest of it in oral transmission perhaps concerned not so much Romuald's indefatigability - which, although it is also required of postulants[20], does not come through as the point of the story - as the conflict between monastery and archbishop; to have become worthy of remembrance this conflict perhaps concerned rather more than the admission of one postulant. The reason given for it - Sant' Apollinare's communal fear of Sergius - is not expanded on, but the inference to be drawn is that it was expected that Romuald's presence would be used by Sergius to dominate or make demands on the community, and Damian's Honest offers no guarantee that this will not come to pass. This would suggest that there had been antipathy towards both Sergius and Honest, still reflected in the oral tradition that Damian received.

There is no indication of the evidence for the three years' stay. This may also have been remembered at Sant 'Apollinare or it may have been assumed by Damian or his informants because of a seventh-century canon that specified this period of coenobitic preparation for the hermitage.[21]

Literal historicity

The evidence concerning Romuald's permanent entry to the monastery thus appears highly uncertain. It is probably true that he was overseen by a senior monk who counselled him in the monastic **conversatio**, as prescribed by St. Benedict in the same chapter as the entry petition[22], and there is no reason to doubt that Honest approved the candidature, but no further evidence is produced to justify the questionable claim of Chapter 1 that Romuald had broken off with his dreaded and dreadful father. In the next chapter, however, Damian will describe a profound antipathy among the brethren to a rather precocious young Romuald himself. This leaves the Sant 'Apollinare community on one side of the equation, with Romuald, Sergius and Honest all together on the other. By Franke's chronology, admittedly speculative as it is, Honest was still abbot of St. Apollinare as well as archbishop of Ravenna at the time Romuald entered the community and within a matter of months afterwards called in the renowned St. Maieul to reform the house on the Cluniac model.[23] If Franke was right (even approximately) in his dating, it was the unreformed community that was reluctant to accept Romuald, an idealistic young man who evidently enjoyed powerful connections in Ravenna, both ecclesiastical and lay, including the patronage of the house's reform-intending abbot.

NOTES

1. Conversus.
2. On such practices at Cluny, cf. Lawrence p.99.
3. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.25, sees humility as the principal edifying example in the **Life**, and comments on Romuald's initial lack of it in this chapter.
4. Cf. **Apocalypse** 1:16.
5. **Matthew** 17:2.
6. **Matthew** 13:43. Damian so comments on this Gospel passage as to make a single image of the glorious vesture and the shining like the sun, in **Expositio visionum SS. Martyrum Mariani et Iacobi**, PL144, 1034BCC.
7. Cf. **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1037D. The incense

itself is here His martyred body; 1037D-1038A.

8. 8:3-4 and 5:8. Damian takes up this latter reference; cf. **Collectanea**, 1031B.
9. 8:3-4.
10. Even the purple of the marble is the colour of the blood of martyrs' passions. Cf. **Expositio** (op.cit.), PL144, 1034D.
11. Cf. n.6 above.
12. Damian uses the Apocalyptic image of the vesture of Christ as an image of His (literal) body: **Collectanea**, PL145, 904CD.
13. Cf. **Matthew** 26:74-5, etc.
14. Cf. **Romans** 8:26.
15. Cf. Blum, **Peter Damian**, pp. 52 & 77-80. Blum explains that conversion is inadequate if it means only the cessation of sinning; compunction must atone for sins already committed. He draws attention to **Sermo** 17 bis, PL144, 599B. References to the theme of second baptism can be found in Op. 13, **De perfectionem monachorum**, & Op. 16, **Rhetoricae declamationis invectio in episcopum monachos ad saeculum revocantem**, PL145, 300A and 376C. Cf. also Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.42.
16. Cf. Op. 13 cc. 12 and 13, PL145, 307D - 311D.
17. Cor.
18. **Ben. Reg.** C.58.
19. As also to Damian, who venerated St. Apollinaris highly as well as St. Romuald. Cf. G. Lucchesi, "Il sermonario di san Pier Damiani come monumento storico agiografico e liturgiro", in **Studi Gregoriani**, vol. 10 (Rome, 1975), p.18.
20. **Ben. Reg.** C.58 again.
21. 41. c. of 2. Trull. Synod. 692 (Mansi XI, 964): "Eos, qui in urbibus vel vicis in clausuras volunt secedere, et sibi ipsis separatim attendere, prius quidem in monasterium ingredi oportet, et anachoreticam, hoc est, ab aliis separatam et remotam vivendi rationem exercere, et spatio triennii ei, qui mansioni praeest, in Dei timore parere, et ita obedientiam in omnibus, ut aequum est, implere, et quod eam ex toto sua sponte amplectantur, ab eius loci praesule examinari deinde sic alio anno extra clausuram fortiter se gerere, ut scopus eorum evadat manifestior..."
22. Cf. n.18 above.
23. Cf. Franke pp. 52-56 & 77. Franke dated Romuald's entry to Sant' Apollinare to 971 or 972 and St. Maieul's reform to 972.

CHAPTER 3 MONKS OF SANT 'APOLLINARE PLOT TO MURDER ROMUALD

This chapter is probably best considered as a single unit:

> But when he saw that no small number of them there lived laxly, proceeding by the broad [way], and that it was not allowable for him to take the arduous, narrow way of perfection[1] that his mind dictated, which he had to do, he began to question himself with concern and he was driven [until he] seethed with the many waves of [his] cogitations. And he lightly presumed to disparage the life of the religious and, as [his] witness, recalled [to them] often, [and] to their confusion, the precepts of the **Rule**. And as he vehemently insisted on showing up their vices, whereas they reckoned the words of a junior and a novice as nothing,[2] they eventually refused to take this opprobium [and] as they disdained to amend their own life, they began to plan the death of [their] critic.[3] Now Romuald was accustomed to arise in the night earlier than the other brethren[4] and if the oratory door was still closed, to perform vigils in prayer within the dormitory itself. Now the said structure was high-built, in the manner of a loft. And so the sons of Cain, at the devil's instigation, devised this plan, that when Romuald arose before the others in [his] accustomed manner,[5] they would throw him headfirst to the earth from the watch-tower[6] of the loft. [When] this was subsequently made known to Romuald by [one of the] accessories to the conspiracy, he now, henceforth, withdrew into the closet of [his] heart[7] and, closing the door of [his] mouth, he prayed to his Father [and so] avoided the imminent peril.[8] And so in this way, as he guarded himself against a headlong bodily fall, he closed the maw of iniquity[9] for the brethren, lest they should fall to the death of [their] souls.

Damian's argument

This rather melodramatic story has been allegorised and moralised, as its conclusion suggests. Romuald represents the rational mind, the strait and narrow, life, and the few who find it, while the careless brethren stand for the devil, the broad gate to destruction, and the many who go in thereat. When they block his access to the narrow way, they whip up in him the surging unrest that is the antithesis of the peaceful single-mindedness of contemplative religion. They have also succeeded Sergius as sons of Cain.

At this point Damian begins to preach eremitism. In the previous chapter, Romuald has apparently made his conversion and entered on the life of religion; as a coenobite. In the next, he will advance to the hermitage. The present chapter suggests why he must do so. With the monks of Sant 'Apollinare he finds himself still in the world. He has not yet escaped the **secularis perturbatio** of which the desert places promised to relieve him in Chapter 1. Now himself the object of Cain's sin, he is implicitly a son of Abel, type of Christ as sacrifice and typical therefore of salvation.[10] He begins by saving these new sons of Cain from this sin itself. The evil in their hearts is as if miraculously dissipated in answer to the saintly prayer, and their actions are changed thereby; as they were not by Romuald's preaching to them on the **Rule**. In the previous chapter, the special relationship of prayer with sacrifice and martyrdom has been implied, and with it, that between prayer and monasticism. Here it is the inner prayer of the contemplative that is shown to be the true fulfilment.

This, then, is the first point in the argument for eremitism, and it implies a soteriology fundamentally incompatible with that of coenobitism. For the saint is not saved by the community but the community by the saint. When the door to the communal oratory - the heart and special workplace of the monastery - is closed to him, he saves those who will be damned in spite of it by closing himself away from it and from them in the **inner** chamber of prayer.[11]

Damian's sources

Like the description of Romuald's yearning for the hermitage in Chapter 1, this is a story without an event. Damian does not in fact charge Sant 'Apollinare with anything so memorable as a realised attempt on Romuald's life. Moreover, unless Romuald himself subsequently told it to his own glory, there could be no oral source for such a story but a self-deprecating community of Sant 'Apollinare. It seems more likely that no story quite like this actually circulated.

Damian, however, could have deduced it from a mere knowledge that Romuald was not popular at Sant 'Apollinare together with knowledge of the nature of Romuald's sanctity and that his life was the working out of predestination. The very conversion was foreshadowed in the forests of Chapter 1 and, now that it has been accomplished, there will be no further development of Romuald's character, only the fulfilment of its potentialities; Damian is not writing a naturalistic biography of a character who changes over time.[12] Young Romuald, therefore, behaves now at Sant 'Apollinare, as soon as he is converted, in accordance with what Damian knew of the mature Romuald.

He knew that Romuald, predestined for the fulness of eremitism, could never have found peace in any self-sufficient **coenobium**; for the **coenobium**, Damian believed, was not properly an end in itself but only a training ground for the desert.[13] He knew that it would not have been possible for such an embryonic saint to have calmly accepted for himself the lower standards of the average monk, whatever exactly they may have been at Sant 'Apollinare at the time. He knew that no monastery ever satisfied the demanding interpretation of St.

Benedict's **Rule** made by the developing reformer. (In chapter after chapter later in the **Life**, Romuald will be dissatisfied with the conduct of monks. Not one monastery in the work, of the many for which Romuald makes himself in various ways responsible, will escape strictures for the low level of its observance.)[14] Damian is evidently aware that it was not really appropriate for the youthful novice to attempt to reform his seniors in the way described - it was in fact grossly in breach of the very **Rule** being quoted - but he does not refrain from mentioning it, inspired as he was not by a separate image of **young** Romuald but by his one image, however multi-faceted, of **Saint** Romuald, reformer. Thus could Damian have known Romuald's response to Sant 'Apollinare even if he lacked a story about it.

Sant 'Apollinare's response to Romuald is likewise consistent with that of monasteries later in the **Life.** Every monastery for which Romuald makes himself in any way responsible in the work persecutes him, roused to anger by the intrusion of his demands into its complacency. Christ Himself had equated anger with murder: "**Audistis quia dictum est antiquis: Non occides: quia autem occiderit, reus erit iudicio. Ego autem dico vobis: quia omnis qui irascitur fratri suo, reus erit iudicio**"[15] And Romuald is to suffer this persecution instead of martyrdom,[16] indeed as his martyrdom **in voto**, as he will spare in Christ's passion as a martyr to monks, it is fitting now that he should suffer abuse from those he desires most immediately to save, that the forcefulness and correctness of his own moral demands upon those who ought by their profession to have been most open to receive him should provoke the crime against him, and that he should in an act of sacrifice (prayer) transform the moment of sin into a moment of redemption. Clearly Damian had no knowledge that these brethren had prepared knives or poison or any other material for their attack;

their intended crime befits their desire to cast him from their communal oratory. As Romuald has not yet been granted the gift of prophecy, his forewarning must have come through human agency. This might all be known by deduction.

Literal historicity

Damian provides no evidence as to whether the conspiracy is to be understood as coming early or late in Romuald's three years' stay at Sant 'Apollinare. If it occurred early and Franke was right that this was before St. Maieul's reform, it could be thought to have some credibility. Damian, however, shows no sign of awareness that Sant 'Apollinare was ever reformed and his next chapter clearly implies that the house was just as bad when Romuald left as it had ever been.

NOTES

1. Cf. **Matthew** 7:13-14.
2. In this Romuald is really a rather poor monk and the older brethren thus far within their rights; cf. **Ben. Reg.** C.71; also C.7, "ninth degree of humility".
3. Not unlike the scribes and the pharisees.
4. Cf. **Ben. Reg.** cc. 8-11 and 14.
5. Benedict suggests competition in the speed of rising, C .22.
6. This is perhaps connected with 2nd **Chronicles** 20:24 and **Isaiah** 21:5 & 8.
7. Cor.
8. Cf. **Matthew** 6:6.
9. Baratrum iniquitatis. This phrase is found also in Op. 3, **Dialogus inter Iudaeum ... et christianum ...** (possibly written in the same year as the VR), PL145, 66BC, in relation to the killing of Christ by the Jews.
10. It may or may not be significant that Damian comments on Christ cast onto the earth in His incarnation. Cf. **Sermo** 67, PL144, 885B - 886C.
11. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.25, notes that to go intra cordis cubiculum is equivalent to making a little cell within the heart. On the primacy of prayer in the cell, ibid. p.59.
12. Cf. introduction n.25.
13. Cf. Ep. 6, 12, PL144, 392. Franke, pp. 42-43 drew attention to Cassian, **Conferences XIV & XIX**, 2. Cf. also Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p. 47. On this belief more generally, cf. Dom Lialine, "Erémitisme", in **Dictionnaire de spiritualité**, IV (1961), col. 950.
14. Bernard Hamilton, "Sainte Pierre Damien et les mouvements

monastiques de son temps", in **Monastic Reform, Catharism and the Crusades** (London, 1979), pp. 178-79, argues that corrupt monasteries were in fact becoming exceptional in Damian's time because reform had been in progress for over a hundred years and was widespread. He adds that Damian's own experience was of good rather than bad coenobitism and that it was because of the Romualdine tradition that he so frequently censured it. The censure of community after community in the **Life**, therefore, is more likely to be made on principle than because of real evidence for every case. Franke, pp. 73-75, drew a highly coloured picture of the general state of degradation and ruin suffered by Sant 'Apollinare and all ecclesiastical Ravenna in Romuald's own time, but Hamilton, p.180, dating St. Maieul's reform of Sant 'Apollinare to 971, argues that it was coenobitism as reformed in the Cluniac tradition, not unreformed, that Romuald rejected.

15. **Matthew** 5:21-22.
16. Cf. especially C.39 below.

CHAPTER 4 ROMUALD RETIRES TO THE DESERT

Three divisions may be made in this chapter: (i) the first two sentences (to p.20 1.10), describing the passage from **coenobium** to hermitage; (ii) the third to sixth sentences (to p.21 1.5), describing Marinus the hermit master; (iii) the remainder of the chapter, in which Romuald is disciplined by Marinus.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald joins Marinus.

> And while the love of perfection grew greater and greater in his heart[1] each day and his mind could find no rest, he heard that there was in the vicinity of Venice a certain spiritual man, named Marinus, who led the eremitical life. And so, having obtained the consent of his abbot and brethren very easily indeed, he travelled to the said venerable man on a ferry [that was] in general use[2] and set about living, in most humble devotion of mind, under his regime.

Requies, in contemplative doctrine, as noted in Chapter 1, is that heavenly peace and spiritual satisfaction that is the end and supreme purpose of the entire Christian life.[3] If Romuald cannot find this at Sant 'Apollinare, he cannot carry his conversion through to perfection there.

At this point, a certain inconsistency is apparent. Only two chapters earlier, Romuald has been persuaded by a monk, characterised as good and wise, to make a permanent conversion there to the **sancte conversationis ordo.** He has then received the habit of that same **conversatio** after two apparitions of the greatest saint of Ravenna have apparently confirmed the sanctity of the establishment and after the Holy Spirit has Himself moved him to the requisite compunction. Now Sant 'Apollinare is so spiritually empty that he must leave

forthwith for the desert. All the celestial vocation is left in the anomalous position of appearing to have been bad advice.

His inconsistency is probably to be explained by Damian's habitual use of adversarial language[4] and radical contrast. Sant 'Apollinare, compared with the secular life of a young nobleman, is a refuge of penitents and the glorious abode of a radiant martyr; Sant' Apollinare, compared with the pure simplicity of the hermitage, is a lair of duplicitous murderers who enjoy no union with Christ. Such expression of relativities in terms of absolutes is a technique that can be detected in Damian's works quite commonly[5] and imposes a requirement of discretion on modern readers, who are not generally accustomed to it. The evil condition of Sant 'Apollinare is overstated here to lead the reader to an appreciation of its inferiority to even the imperfect eremitism of Marinus that is about to be described. This **coenobium** thus emerges as the staging post between the world and the desert in Romuald's spiritual progress which the eremitical tradition associated with his name, and represented most articulately by Damian himself,[6] had come to regard as the proper and original function of **coenobia.** This is pure eremitical theory from Damian's own **milieu.**[7]

The means by which Romuald travels is also probably intended to be understood as significant. Later in the **Life** Damian will describe details of other journeys - by ship, on bare feet, by donkey, by horse - to represent various kinds of spiritual journeys concomitant with the physical journeys. The ship was a standard symbol of the Church or Christian community and entering a ship could betoken embarkation on a voyage to salvation. In the next chapter and again in Chapter 33, ships will be specially got for special journeys. Here Damian is

apparently implying that the journey to Marinus was **not** a special one; the transfer from **coenobium** to hermitage, **navigio discurrente**, had by Damian's time become a routine matter to eremitical foundations.

(ii) The characterisation of Marinus.

> Now Marinus was, among [his] other virtues, a man of simple heart[8] and entirely sincere purity, [who] had not in fact been taught by any tutoring in the eremitical conversation but had been aroused to it solely by the force of [his] good will.[9] Now he had, moreover, this manner of living, that, through the whole cycle of the year, he would partake on three days [each] week of an ordinary loaf of bread and a handful of broadbeans but on three [others], [as he was] discreet in [his] sobriety, he would take [some] wine and cooked food. He indeed used to chant the entire psalter each day. But [he was] undoubtedly rough [and ready] and entirely uninstructed in the procedure of the solitary life; as the blessed Romuald himself later used merrily to relate, [he would] frequently leave [his] cell [and], together with [his] disciple, walk slowly about through the full extent of the hermitage [as he] chanted [the psalter], now performing twenty psalms under one tree, now thirty or forty under another.

Marinus is without doubt on the better side of the contrast with Sant' Apollinare, but this account of him is clearly circumspect because Marinus is not perfectly orthodox.

On the positive side, Marinus, without instruction, has correctly apprehended the fundamentals of the eremitical life: asceticism and prayer, represented by the paucity of his diet and his daily recitation of the psalter.[10] His sincerity is recorded in the superlative. Thus far the characterisation is inconsistent with the authority of St. Benedict, who did not allow the dignity of true eremitic status for those uninstructed in **coenobia** and who categorised the living in Marinus's manner separately from hermits and described them as though inevitably and detestably evil. Marinus, indeed, is by the **Rule** of St. Benedict a classic sarabaite[11]; whereas Damian clearly wishes it to be understood that an anomalous but sincere

hermit bears better fruit than a correctly instituted but corruptible **coenobium.** This is his second point of distinctly eremitical theory. Having suggested that it is the holy individual who saves the community rather than **vice versa,** he now indicates that communal instruction is not - as St. Benedict had held it to be - absolutely requisite.

The crudity of Marinus's practice, however, is not presented as a positive element of his **simplicitas.** Marinus is not a holy fool. Romuald's own authority is invoked in the characterisation of his peregrination of the trees as crude and silly. The indiscretion he is about to reveal in the next section will indicate unfamiliarity with one of the fundamentals of religious **magisterium.**[12] "Among other virtues ... trained by no tutoring" becomes "but ... patently rough [and ready] and entirely uninstructed." "Discreet sobriety" is about to become "indiscreet severity" (of **disciplina**). Damian is having it both ways. Marinus would be a better hermit had suitable training been available; training that was certainly available in communities associated with the tradition of Romuald in Damian's own time. Damian is able to justify and excuse Marinus, and to suggest the inferiority of ordinary coenobitic instruction, without implying that his path remains acceptable and is still to be followed.

(iii) Marinus disciplines Romuald.

> Now because Romuald had left the world uneducated,[13] he was scarcely able, [when] the psalter [was] opened, to decipher the notes of his verses syllable by syllable, and this downward concentration of [his] eyes generated in him an intolerably oppressive sloth.[14] So Marinus took [his] rod in [his] right hand [and] beat Romuald, [who] sat opposite [him], on the left side of [his] head, many, many times. After a great deal [of this], however, Romuald, quite compelled by grave necessity, humbly said, "Master, please strike me alternately on the right temple, because I am now losing the hearing of [my] left ear

> altogether." Then [Marinus], amazed at his so very great longsuffering, tempered [his] indiscreetly severe discipline.

Marinus's response to Romuald's sin, although indiscreet in severity, is correct in nature. For the rod, his chosen instrument of correction, is one of the most potent of traditional symbols. Damian comments upon it in various of his works. Most simply it represents Christ Himself, and more particularly His Incarnation and His function as the Wisdom of God and the Power of God[15]. Christ the object of religious attention is also the source of its potency and of the spiritual understanding which motivates it; so true Christian **disciplina** will be an education of the spirit[16]. More obviously, the rod is a traditional symbol of punishment of the body (promoted, among others, by St. Benedict for the "**improbi ... duri ... superbi vel inobedientes**[17]") and it is the instrument of the physical discipline of self-flagellation which Damian promoted as an appropriate accompaniment to the psalter[18]; the continuity of body and soul and the special relationship between prayer and martyrdom are again evident. So the rod is symbolic of Christian **disciplina** in its full contemplative sense, physical and spiritual edification being advanced in unison and without necessity of resort to intellectual endeavour; the problem of the syllables is not solved by a reading lesson.[19]

The right hand in which Marinus takes the rod continues this point. Most obviously it is the hand of authority, indicating the traditional themes of the dependence of spiritual advancement on the virtue of obedience, and the divine vicariate of the religious master; but, more importantly in the present context, serving also to introduce the explicit and repeated dichotomy of right and left which characterises the climax of the story. For right and left, always symbolic of the better and the worse, are frequently used to indicate the relationship

between the contemplative and the active[20]. Insofar as Romuald's failing concerns reading, it is in the active category. So Marinus applies his right-handed discipline not to "one side" of Romuald's head but explicitly to the left side. The result of an excess of this is that Romuald begins to lose his understanding. For the ear, even more than the eye, is the ancient symbol of that faculty: "He who has ears, let him hear ... " The active and contemplative, as Romuald himself suggests, should be balanced. Marinus's indiscreet concentration on the left ear alone is counter-productive. Romuald's ear indeed needs to ring with the rod of discipline, but he should not be deafened.

Damian's sources

The first of the three sections, relating how Romuald came to Marinus, has probably been put together from scraps of information rather than from a coherent story recording the transfer . That Romuald could find no **requies** for his growing **amor** at Sant 'Apollinare is a recapitulation of the main point of the previous chapter. That he heard of the hermit Marinus who lived near Venice is a minimal statement of fact, indicative of no knowledge of the extent or nature of Marinus's reputation at the time. That he travelled **"navigio discurrente"** may be based in a scrap of knowledge or assumed from Marinus's Venetian location; Damian does not make it plain whether he means that Romuald sailed all the way from Ravenna or just across the Venetian lagoon[21]. That he obtained the permission of his abbot and brethren can be assumed because it is required by the Rule.[22] This section might be taken as evidence that Damian in fact knew almost nothing of how Romuald came to be with Marinus.

The second section, recording Marinus's anomalous status and his ascetic practices of fasting and psalter devotion, is much more likely to be based in oral record. Any religious community who cared to remember Marinus at all would be likely to find these details significant. It may be questioned, however, whether the setting aside of various parts of the hermitage for various psalter devotions was originally recalled as so obviously foolish a practice as Damian wishes it to be thought. The unusual resort to Romuald's own authority in the characterisation of it as crude and silly might suggest that Damian was recording a story at least sometimes accepted seriously. Reasons have already been suggested for Damian's limiting the veneration of Marinus, and there is later evidence that the austere saint regarded processions as a concession to weakness characteristic of coenobitism, hermits living in cells normally staying within them and celebrating the divine office there.[23]

Perhaps similarly adapted from a story of originally different import is the complementary episode concerning Marinus's disciplining of young Romuald. For this story, as Damian presents it, has two conclusions simultaneously; Marinus was indiscreetly severe and Romuald was wondrously patient. It may be questioned whether it would have circulated in quite this form in the monastic telling, deprecating the master as much as it glorifies the disciple. Perhaps it originally focused on Romuald alone and was told to demonstrate the spirit in which young monks should accept magisterial discipline, even when they thought it unfair, telling of Marinus's indiscretion only because that was necessary to make the story work. However this may be, Damian, as suggested above, had his own reasons to wish to depict Marinus as of limited sanctity. That the story Damian heard recorded the defect requiring the discipline as inability to read is also

questionable. Widespread clerical ignorance, including difficulty reading even syllable by syllable and therefore properly understanding the liturgy being chanted, is a concern expressed by Damian also in a later **opusculum.**[24] It is therefore not unlikely that he himself supposed this to be the cause of Romuald's problem with Marinus, drawing on his own knowledge of the problem caused for the superior by the resulting distraction during the divine office.

Literal historicity

This would leave two probable oral records of Marinus in the chapter, affected by Damian's redaction, one probably true to life and the other probably not. For the chanting of the entire psalter once each day is noted in the **Rule** of St. Benedict as a patristic practice humbling to monks of his own time and it is not unlikely that a religious in Marinus's position would set himself to emulate it. The mobile psalmody and the fasting described are both also plausible. This section, furthermore, may record well-witnessed, lifelong practices. It is probably true to life. The story of the discipline, on the other hand, cannot be true to life unless it was told by Romuald himself (deprecating his master and praising himself), by Marinus (deprecating himself and praising his still-living former disciple) or by a third party present in Marinus's hermitage at the time. Damian provides no evidence of any such source. He shows no sign of any significant knowledge of Romuald's sojourn with Marinus.[25]

NOTES

1. Animus.
2. Navigio discurrente.
3. Requies, as pax, ought indeed to have been the greatest of virtues in a Benedictine house. Cf. Ep. 8, 5, PL144, 261D. Cf. also c.1 n.12.
4. Cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.24.

5. It had a long history. On Jesus's teaching, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother [etc.] ... he cannot be my disciple," [Lk. 14:26]. G.B. Caird comments, "To hate father and mother did not mean on the lips of Jesus what it conveys to the Western reader ... The semitic mind is comfortable only with extremes ... primary colours with no half-shades of compromise ... The semitic way of saying 'I prefer this to that' is 'I like this and hate that'." **The Pelican New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel of St. Luke** (Harmondsworth, 1963) pp. 178-179. Christian commentators trained in rhetoric had long made their arguments as strongly as possible rather than presented balanced cases. E.F. Sutcliffe, for example, in G.W.H. Lampe, ed., **The Cambridge History of the Bible**, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1975), p.81, calls some of St. Jerome's controversial language "violent".
6. Cf. c.3 n.13.
7. Ibid.
8. Simplicis animi. Simplicitas is a major monastic theme, carrying a sense of singleness (cf. **Matthew** 6:22) or undistracted devotion to God. Damian develops this theme in relation to the low value of intellectual complexities in Op. 45, **De sancta simplicitate**, Brezzi and Nardi, pp. 163-201.
9. Bone voluntatis. It is to men of this kind that the heavenly host offered pax at the birth of Jesus, repeated in the Gloria of the mass: "et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis"; cf. **Luke** 2:14.
10. Cf. Tabacco, VR p.20 nn.4 and 5. Romuald himself introduced a double psalter, for the living and the dead, a practice followed at Fonte Avellana. Cf. Op.15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, PL145, 343C; also Blum, **Peter Damian**, pp. 155-56 and Cantin, op.cit., p.20.
11. Cf. c.49 n.8.
12. Cf. Op. 15, PL145, 348C - 349A. For earlier authorities on this tradition, cf. e.g. **Ben. Reg.** c.64 (also cc. 2, 27, 55); Cassian, **Conferences**, 2.
13. Idiota. Franke, p.70, argues that this was unusual for a man of high rank. Niermeyer, however, cites Ep. 8, 12, PL144, 281B, as evidence that "idiota" can mean a lay brother or adult convert; in which case Romuald's problem is not that he cannot read but simply that he **must** read, that he cannot chant "by heart".
14. Accidia. In Op. 13, **De perfectione monachorum**, Brezzi and Nardi p.280, Damian seems to regard the eyes as the natural seat of accidia as, for example, the throat is of gluttony. Presumably there is a connection with drowsiness.
15. Cf. **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1013D-1015C. So in the most general terms the discipline of the master takes place in the virtus of Christ Himself and transfers something of His own power and wisdom to His follower.
16. Cf. **Collectanea**, PL145, 1016BC, where Damian comments on the rod of Aaron as the wisdom of Christ that absorbs all earthly wisdom in the spirituality of the Church. Cf. also 1073AB.
17. **Ben. Reg.** c.2. It is part of Marinus's indiscretion to apply such stricture too quickly to Romuald: "Et honestiores quidem atque intelligibiles animos prima vel secunda admonitione verbis [abbas] corripiat ... ", and only those others "verberum vel corporis castigatione in ipso initio peccati coerceat, sciens scriptum: 'stultus verbis non corrigitur' [Cf. **Proverbs** 23:13-14]". The purpose, however, is thus the same, and with the rod Marinus is doing the work of magisterial words. Indeed this

association is found in the **Proverbs** source itself: "Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of they words... Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge. Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod [etc.] ... " Prov. 23:9-13. The importance of the image of words will be considered further below in relation to cc. 6 & 7.

18. Cf. Ep. 8, 27, PL145, 417 A-C, and especially **Vita SS. Rodulphi et Dominici Loricati**, PL144, 1017B - 1019B, where he relates this of his own disciple Dominic Loricatus. Cf. also c.14 n.1 below.

19. That true understanding is gained by spiritual exercise rather than by intellectual endeavour is one of the most studied aspects of Damian's thought. Cf. especially Cantin, op.cit., and also **Les sciences séculières et la foi; les deux voies de la science au jugement de S. Pierre Damien** (1007-1072) (Spoleto, 1975). An older work is J. Gonsette, **Pierre Damien et la culture profane** (Louvain, 1956).

20. This can be found most explicitly in John of Lodi's **Life** of Damian himself: "Vir itaque Dei Petrus ... liberalibus apprime disciplinis imbutus, cum Pythagorici apicis bivium paululum transcendisset, laevum, quem coeperat, consulte relinquens, dextrum callem prudenter arripuit; ipsoque iuventutis fervore divina gratia, saeculari pompae renuntians, ad perfectionem monachicam avide convolant." PL144, 115A. In PL145, 1093C Damian has the right eye as the light of contemplation: **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum.**

21. In the next chapter a party will leave Venice for Cuxa by ship, but evidently not sail all the way to the Pyrenees.

22. Cf. c.24 section (iv) below and c.24 n.6. Franke, pp. 54-5, argued that Damian's evidence here is that Romuald departed after Honest had been succeeded as abbot of Sant 'Apollinare; in contrast to Romuald's arrival, for which Damian mentions no abbot but only the archbishop (-abbot).

23. Cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 44-45: "tout le contexte montre que Pierre Damien considère les processions, par conséquent le cloître qui leur est nécessaire [in established and populous communities], ainsi que les moyens de rendre la liturgie solennelle, comme une concession à ceux dont la faiblesse doit être soutenue, comme c'est le cas dans les monastères ..." Cf. p.47 and Op.14, **De ordine eremitarum**, PL145, 334D-335A.

24. Cf. Op.26, **Contra inscitiam et incuriam clericorum**, PL145, 497-504, and Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 71-72.

25. Franke, p.56, dated this sojourn to 974/5-978. The former of these figures, however, depends on his dating of the stay at Sant 'Apollinare, and is by no means certain. Cf. c.2 above.

CHAPTER 5 ROMUALD REMOVES TO CUXA

In Chapter 5, Romuald removes with Marinus from the hermitage near Venice to another, in the vicinity of the great Pyrenean abbey of Cuxa, in the aftermath of the Venetian political ructions of 976-978. Damian's account of this may be divided into seven: (i) the first three sentences (to p.22 1.2), constituting an introduction; (ii) the fourth to eighth sentences, with the first half of the ninth (to p.23 1.16), describing the Venetian **coup d'etat**; (iii) the last half-sentence of the first paragraph (to p.23 1.18), noting the usurper's compunction; (iv) the first and second sentences of the second paragraph (to p.24 1.2), introducing Abbot Guarin; (v) the third and fourth sentences of the second paragraph, explaining the involvement of Marinus and Romuald; (vi) the fifth and sixth sentences of the second paragraph (to p.25 1.8), describing the flight from Venice; (vii) the last two sentences, noting the Italians' arrangements at Cuxa.

Damian's argument

The first three sections constitute a single paragraph of argument:

(i) Peter Orseolo is introduced.

> Now at this same time Peter, surnamed Orseolo, was directing the reins [of government] of the duchy of Dalmatia. [Peter] had in fact earned [his] rise to the rank of this office by reason of [his] support for the killers of his predecessor, namely Vitalis Candiano. Now it is my opinion that it [will] not be irrelevant if I explain, in a strictly abbreviated summary, why this [man] had been done away with by his own [subjects].

(ii) His coup d'etat is explained.

> For he had taken in marriage the sister of that marquess [called] Hugh the Great and, in the urge to emulate his brother-in-law, acquired many knights from the regions of Lombardy and Tuscany by [offering] profligate monetary provisions. Now the inhabitants of Venice would not tolerate this and they secretly conceived a plan to burst violently into the duke's palace[1] in a surprise attack and ruthlessly slaughter him, with all his house, by the edge of the sword.[2] The conspiracy of this conventicle was in the event discovered, [and] Duke Vitalis, entrenched behind day and night watches, brought the wiles of his enemies to nothing. They tried one thing and another, but they could not carry through to fulfilment what they had set out to do. Eventually it was realised that they should first set Peter's house on fire, [as] it immediately adjoined the duke's palace, and in this way both take the duke and burn away his whole household. And [when] they sought Peter's consent to try this idea out, [as] he had been a partner in their plan, they eventually settled this agreement for [his] reward: for his one house, which they would destroy by fire, they would lay all Venice under his control and, having removed [the man] they detested, would immediately propose [Peter] as duke in his place. And so this [was] the way [in which] Peter obtained the principate of the Dalmatian realm.

(iii) He soon repents of this.

Damian immediately draws attention to the new doge's coming compunction:

> Presently, already enslaved by the pleasures of his high estate, he was finally brought, by dispensation of divine grace, to compunction of heart.[3]

This account of political events is highly moralised for the hagiographical context.[4] The fact of first importance to Damian, as he makes plain in his last sentence of the paragraph, is that Peter is a great sinner whose damnation is to be averted; when he comes into contact with Romuald, as it will turn out. This is the first time that Romuald brings another to compunction, appropriately enough immediately following his own attainment of eremitical status and immediately preceding his advancement to eremitical **magisterium** at Cuxa. Orseolo is to be one of his first disciples there; afterwards, although Damian does not point this out, to be himself regarded as a saint of the Church.

Damian includes all the details that establish the wide significance of the coming conversion. For all Venice is brought low when her ruler falls into the sin of emulation,[5] associated with that great evil, money. Damian accepts that the doge's excess should lead to revolt almost as though it is inevitable. He does not in any way justify the actions of the conspirators as tyrannicide and he clearly regards Peter's succession as unacceptable usurpation, but he does not comment on this. Instead, he writes of Vitalis's downfall in terminology of asceticism - the **hostiles insidiae**, the day and night watches, the consumption by fire, the **os gladii** - the same language as that used for the great conflicts between divine and demonic forces,[6] and, more particularly, for those between the Christian soul and rebellious members of the body. Like an individual Christian who first falls into one sin's power and then loses control altogether, in spite of his vigils, Vitalis Candiano is destroyed by his wily, evil enemies, consumed by fire, the conspirators as though demons against him. Peter Orseolo is in his turn enslaved by the force of insurrection whose agent he is. The powers of evil hold sway over Venice.

Thus Damian shows not only the magnitude of Peter's conversion, but also how Romuald's eremitical withdrawal will serve the wider Christian community. For the sin for which Peter will do penance is the sin of the whole duchy. Just as Romuald's own departure from the **coenobium** without peace in the previous chapter has been necessitated by the murderous communal iniquity prevailing there, so his first conversion is of the representative of a community's sin. By the end of the chapter Romuald will have "gathered" the sinner into his own sanctity. In Chapter 8 the reader will learn of the subsequent good estate of Venice.

First Damian must describe how Romuald was brought to the doge. What he intends to convey here seems quite straightforward:

(iv) Guarin arrives and is asked for advice.

> Now [there was] a certain venerable abbot, named Guarin, from the farther parts of Gaul, [who] was accustomed to making pilgrimages for the sake [and by the grace][7] of prayer, through the various regions of the world.[8] And [as] this [man] came to the duke, he was at once pressed by him to offer advice as to [how he might] escape the peril of so great a sin.

(v) Marinus and Romuald are called in.

> Marinus and Romuald [were] therefore summoned, [and] this was what he was ordered by their common sentence: that he leave the world at the same time as the duchy he had usurped by [his] crime, and, because he had unjustly broken into the stronghold of [someone] else's lordship he himself should put himself into subjugation to the power of [someone] else's mastery. And because [Peter], [as] a man undoubtedly in a position of power, was clearly reluctant to make his conversion, he thought that he should take counsel on this [course to] safety.

(vi) Departure from Venice.

> And so, as the feast of a certain martyr saint in whose name he had hitherto privately kept an oratory on his own estate, was approaching, he sent his wife there on the previous day as though he [were] going to follow directly, ordering her both to provide the most elaborate decorations for the church and to prepare quickly a banquet of sumptuous delicacies for those [who would] accompany him on the next day. He stayed behind, however, after [his] consort [had departed], removed those of his treasures which he thought it right [to take, and then] with a certain member of his household, namely John Gradenigo, who had been aware of the aforementioned conspiracy, and with those three blessed men whom we have cited before, he boarded ship. And then to Gaul, to Abbot Guarin's monastery, the great convert fled away.

These sentences tell a story of apparently very dubious edificatory value; the three blessed men have become involved in an act of deceit for which no justification is offered, the feast of the martyr has been ignored, no provision has been made for the disposition of the

duchy[9] or the support of the duchess after Peter's departure. Damian need not have told us this.

Perhaps the key to his intention here is the interplay of **basilica**, to which he would otherwise have gone, and ship, to which he does go. One of the most pervasive of ancient symbols of the Church, the ship has already been introduced in relation to Romuald's advancement to the hermitage in the previous chapter. So Peter celebrates the feast of the martyr not by visiting that martyr's particular church, but by himself making his conversion to religion and advancing to the Church's institutionalised martyrdom; by the end of the chapter he will have joined Romuald in a hermitage. Where Romuald has been called to conversion through St. Apollinaris, martyr of Ravenna, Peter makes his conversion in the time of his own special (although anonymous) martyr. The Church is adorned with the glory of new converts, and they are set on course to the delights of the hermitage and the **heavenly** feast. The reason why Damian mentions the deceiving of the duchess is therefore probably because it introduces the **basilica** to the tale. The feast of the martyr is in fact very worthily observed. Even the duchy is looked after, for where Vitalis has married and spent his treasure on related display, Peter leaves his wife and takes his treasure - as the reader is about to be informed - to that great celestial warrior the Archangel Michael, whose house Cuxa is. The processes of corruption that have brought Venice low are thus put into reverse.

(vii) The hermitage at Cuxa.

The final sentences seal the conversion with the removal of Peter, with John, to the new hermitage of Marinus and Romuald near Cuxa. The

appropriate coenobitic preparation having been quickly passed through, these brethren are truly "gathered" - **aggregati** - into the hermits' company:

> And so Peter and John became monks in the community of St. Michael, [while] Marinus and Romuald continued on [to a place] not far from the monastery [and] returned to the solitary life to which they had been accustomed. And those already-mentioned brethren, [when] scarcely a year's time had passed, were gathered to them to take on to perfection the rigour of the same solitude.

Damian's sources

The seven sections into which the chapter has here been divided may be grouped into three categories historiographically: (a) the first and third sections, introducing the **coup d'etat** and noting that divine grace brought Orseolo to compunction, which are clearly editorial; (b) the second, fourth and sixth sections, describing the **coup d'etat**, Guarin's arrival and the flight from Venice, which are based in historical knowledge; (c) the fifth and seventh sections, recording the summoning of Romuald and Marinus to give counsel, and the arrangements at Cuxa, which are probably deduced.

The second, fourth and sixth sections relate a series of events known also from alternative sources - the **Chronicon Venetum** of John the Deacon of Venice, and the **Vita Petri Urseoli** by an anonymous monk of Cuxa[10] - from which Damian diverges to the point of demonstrable error: Peter Orseolo's predecessor was **Peter** Candiano and Vitalis instead his successor.[11] Tabacco points out that the chapter accords with the chronicle of John the Deacon in general outline but suggests an independent oral tradition because of the need to explain the points of diversion:

> **Pier Damiani raccoglie probabilmente una tradizione monastica, che cerca di coordinare l'improvvisa esaltazione dell'Orseolo al dogato, dopo l'atroce fine del predecessore, con l'improvvisa sua partenza da Venezia insieme col Gradenigo: l'idea di una loro conversione ed espiazione doveva sorgere spontanea.**[12]

This is reasonable and plausible but it is an argument with two weaknesses.

Firstly, it allows too little for the redactive enterprise of Damian himself. As every point of Damian's version, except for Candiano's mistaken name, apparently contributes directly to an argument important to himself, there is no reason to suppose that the implicit interpretation of the events antedates the author.

Secondly, Tabacco suggests no function for the conjectured tradition, no reason for monks to have continued, over a period of about sixty-five years, to care how and why Orseolo and Gradenigo left Venice. It might be hypothesised that it was because these had both come to be venerated as saints, but there is no evidence in the text to support any such speculation; unlike John the Deacon's account, which, although part of a chronicle, becomes hagiographical in tone when it treats of Orseolo,[13] Damian's version of events shows no trace of reverence for any Venetian.[14] Romuald himself was clearly not the focus of such a tradition either; even as Damian tells the story, he and Marinus are scarcely more than tacked on towards the end. There is no identifiable form or function of a monastic tradition in these passages.

The alternatives to tradition are written records and surviving witnesses. Of these, the former do not seem probable. Damian's account is quite dissimilar to that of the **Vita Urseoli** and, although

the divergent characteristions of the same events made by Damian and John could be explained by differences in point of view and intention, some of Damian's most important information is not included by John but is corroborated by the **Vita Urseoli.**[15]

It seems likely, therefore, that the information has come from one or more surviving witnesses, old monks who had been young boys at the time the events took place and could remember everything that the public then knew (except, most characteristically for an ageing memory, the correct Christian name of Orseolo's predecessor). This would be consistent with Damian's statement that he will strictly abbreviate his account (traditions tend to assume economical forms) and it would explain why the chapter appears to be written not from the consistent, "insider" point of view of Romuald or Orseolo or any other party involved but from a peripheral perspective.

For the fifth section there is no corroboration. It is most unlikely moreover, as Franke pointed out, that the counsel of a very inexperienced, uneducated Romuald would have been required,[16] and there is no reason to suppose that Marinus's was either; indeed, neither of the other sources mentions Marinus at all. There is no way Damian could have known what counsel was offered Orseolo unless his source was directly or indirectly one of the parties involved, which is not the point of view from which the rest of the chapter is written. Damian has probably deduced this section from his bare knowledge that Romuald travelled with the group and his own understanding of what counsel would have been required.

The seventh section appears to be of similar status. Damian's **schema** of spiritual progress does not allow for reversion from hermitage to

coenobium;[17] therefore Romuald settled immediately in a Pyrenean hermitage with his master Marinus.

Literal historicity

If this analysis of the chapter is correct, Damian's account in the important second, fourth and sixth sections is likely to be a reliable outline of events. The fifth and seventh sections, however, and all attributions of motive, are probably pure supposition. The only detail concerning Romuald himself that certainly antedates Damian's literary construction is that found also in the Cuxa source: that Romuald travelled with Guarin and Peter. No evidence is provided as to the real reason for Romuald's inclusion on this journey and Damian's failure to offer any reason for Romuald and Marinus to have remained at Cuxa thereafter suggests that he really knew virtually nothing about it. For the next five chapters, indeed, which deal with this sojourn, Damian's historical knowledge appears very questionable, his record replete with eremitical theory and undateable reminiscences of Romuald. As also with journeys made by Romuald later in the **Life**, there is reason to suppose that the monks of north-eastern Italy derived their information on Romuald locally and knew very little of what he had done far away.[18]

NOTES

1. Or "doge's palace"; ducis palatium. Damian, however, is presenting Vitalis as duke of the Dalmatians rather than doge of Venice.
2. In ore gladii; a common Biblical image.
3. Cor.
4. John the Deacon, by contrast, chronicles the destruction in the fire of many churches and houses in the vicinity; cf. G. Monticolo, ed., **Cronache veneziane antichissime**, vol. 9 of Fonti per la storia d'Italia (Rome, 1890), p.140. Damian keeps to his point.
5. Emulatio is one of the works of the flesh listed by Paul to the **Galatians** 5:20-21. Inimicitiae, contentiones, irae, rixae,

dissensiones, sectae, invidiae and homicidia appear in the same place, and Paul concludes (v.26): "Non efficiamur inanis gloriae cupidi, invicem provocantes, invicem invidentes." It is easy enough to see why Damian would have supposed emulatio to have been the motive of the doge's unfortunate policy.

6. Cf., for example, the image of walling the self in with vigils recalled by Tabacco in relation to c.7, p.27 n.3. Damian himself uses a similar image as an entirely spiritual metaphor in, e.g., Op.15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, PL145, 357D.
7. Orationis gratia. This appears to be a pun. In the immediately preceding paragraph, the salvation of Peter has been foreshadowed, "respectu divine gratie." In c.15 Guarin will be described as travelling in this way only, "orationis causa" (section iii). Damian is presenting Guarin as a pilgrim. John the Deacon informs his readers that Guarin was headed to the "limina apostolorum" in Rome at the time; Monticolo, op.cit., p.141.
8. Franke, p.101, summarised some of his journeys.
9. In John the Deacon's account, a delay is allocated to allow such provisions to be made. Cf. G. Monticolo, op.cit., p.142.
10. Franke, pp. 8-15, discussed the relative merits of the three sources. For the **Vita Petri Urseoli**, cf. VR p.24 n.1.
11. Cf. VR p.22 n.1.
12. VR p.21 n.2.
13. Where Damian explains Candiano's military acquisitiveness by the sin of emulatio, John explains it in relation to the doge's need to protect lands. His version is set in a general context of violence, the citizens of Venice rising against their doge because of his austeritas, his harshness. Peter Orseolo, uninvolved in the conspiracy by this account and already inclined to monastic conversion, replaces him. The contrast is between the warlike, who perishes in flames, and the peaceable, who is to be sanctified; Monticolo, op.cit., p.138.
14. Franke, p.14, argued that Damian's evidence must have come from a party hostile to Orseolo (a point implied also by C.M. Aherne, writing on "St. Peter Orseolo" in the **New Catholic Encyclopedia**). The only evidence he adduced for this, however, was that such a party is known to have existed in Orseolo's lifetime. Damian's own hagiographical interest in Romuald, presented as Orseolo's counsellor and subsequent ascetic master, may in fact be in large measure responsible for the exaggeration of the magnitude of the conversion.
15. John in fact makes no mention of either Romuald's participation in the doge's flight or the removal of treasure, both of which are confirmed by the anonymous hagiographer. Cf. **Vita Urseoli** pp. 854-55.
16. Franke, p.14. Franke, however, argued (p.13) that Romuald must have been summoned to the doge at the time he was taking counsel because the flight, in which Romuald participated, was secret. In fact there is no clear evidence as to exactly why, when or how Romuald became involved.
17. "Non itaque ad monasterialem laxitudinem ab eremitica districtione descendere". Op.14, **De ordine eremitarum**, PL145, 334AB.
18. Cf. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, p.78.

CHAPTER 6 ASCETICISM AND MAGISTERIUM

The historiographical status of this chapter is very uncertain but four divisions will be made here: (i) the first two sentences (to p.26 1.7), in which Romuald advances to leadership in the hermitage; (ii) the third sentence (to p.26 1.9), in which he lives on chickpeas; (iii) the fourth sentence (to p.26 1.11), in which he and Gradenigo grow wheat; (iv) the last sentence, commenting on the value of the agriculture.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald becomes master of the hermitage.

> During this time Romuald's mind [was] fired with desire [and] he began to grow wondrously from strength to strength[1] and to surpass the other brethren by such long strides of holy conversation that already whatever he might decide among the brethren about either spiritual [matters] or indeed bodily [matters], his sentence would, by [their] common will, always prevail.

In this chapter the themes of eremitical asceticism, to which Romuald has advanced in Chapter 4, and **magisterium**, to which the asceticism has pointed in Chapter 5, are developed further together. Romuald's **magisterium** is both explained and legitimated in the process. Having made this initial statement of the **nexus**, Damian gives two examples of Romuald's ascetic prowess, which are most conveniently considered together:

(ii) He eats nothing but chickpeas.

> Through the whole [course of the] year[2], in fact, Romuald had nothing else for food each day than the one handful of boiled chickpeas [on which] alone he lived.

(iii) He and Gradenigo grow their own wheat.

> But for three years he and John Gradenigo, breaking the earth with hoes and sowing wheat, lived by the labour of their own hands.[3]

The association of asceticism and **magisterium** is thus focused on the image of breaking ground to sow wheat. As far as the narrative is concerned, this is curious; the reader is told that Romuald lives only on chickpeas **per continuum annum**, which does not necessarily mean for just one year, and yet it is wheat that he is described as sowing in his pursuit of self-sufficiency. The reason for this is probably, once again, that Damian's Romuald is not a real individual subject to the normal contingencies of time, but an emblematic model.[4] The chickpea fast was still followed in Damian's time, and recommended by him[5], as a particularly stringent one, so the new ascetic master follows it. The self-discipline of manual labour, especially agricultural, was propagated by a string of authorities,[6] and wheat was a symbolic crop in the teaching of Jesus Himself, so the new master sows that; whether at the same time as he eats only chickpeas or at some other time scarcely matters.

Seeds of wheat are in fact employed and explained by Christ in two of the parables of **Matthew 13**: the great parable of the sower[7], and the parable of the weeds.[8] In the former, the seed is the "word of the kingdom", **verbum regni**, which, unless it falls on good ground, is not understood, does not endure tribulation or persecution, or is choked by the cares of the world and the delight in riches. In the parable of the weeds, the good seeds of wheat are the sons of the kingdom (of Heaven), sown by the Son of Man in the field of the world (**mundus**). So the image of Romuald as sower serves not only to present him once again as subsidiary to Christ, as a sower of heavenly righteousness in

the world, but above this to bring forward the relationship of his pre-eminence concerning the words of truth to his breaking of the ground to ensure the fertility of the soil that receives the seeds from which he himself is nourished; Romuald (as also John) increases his own understanding by breaking his own hardness in ascetic rigour[9], and it is this that allows him to surpass Marinus as a teacher of others. This is the third point of the ascetic-eremitic theory presented: the superior master is primarily concerned with his own condition, as it is into this that his disciples are **aggregati.**[10]

(iv) This multiplies the fasting.

> Undoubtedly, as they practised[11] agriculture, they doubled the weight of [their] fasting.[12]

The concept of weight turns out to be of more than passing interest to Damian. In each of the next two chapters, and then again in Chapters 11 and 48, other images of weight will be used. The present image is thus the introduction to a new theme as well as a gloss on the meaning of this chapter itself. It can be understood in at least three ways: that fasting is burdensome and to bear it therefore a good work; that the agricultural activity increases the **value** of the fasting, its weight as though on scales; and, in a truly ascetic sense, as an athletic exercise in training for the withstanding and throwing off of other, unwanted, weights. It is this last meaning, making this chapter direct preparation for the important next one[13], that Damian seems to have had in mind here, for the oppressive weight that is to be endured and cast off in the next chapter is that of the devil himself. There is thus a direct connection between the hoeing and sowing work and resisting the devil.

Damian's sources

It is very unclear what Damian really knew about Romuald at Cuxa but none of the four sections into which this chapter has been divided would require him to know much at all.

The first section, in which Romuald becomes the master of the hermitage, is quite vague. It may be based in no greater knowledge than that John Gradenigo, in later life at Monte Cassino, used to tell of what he had learnt from **magister** Romuald.[14]

The fasting and gardening of the second and third sections could be known from the same source, but only if much more particular information had come north from there. Both practices could alternatively have been read back in time from what was known of later activity of Romuald and, in the case of the gardening, perhaps Gradenigo.

The final comment is straightforwardly editorial.

Literal historicity

Although the picture of life at Cuxa is not implausible and may be true to the spirit of the hermitage there, it is really very slight historical evidence.

NOTES

1. De virtutibus in virtutes.
2. Or "for the next year"; per continuum annum.
3. Tabacco notes some of the ancient exemplars for such a practice. VR p.26 n.2. The implications of such earlier accounts, however, are not necessarily the same as Damian's. In the cited passages of Cassian, for example, the concern is principally with idleness and the value of work in overcoming this. Abba

Abraham, in the first cited passage, indeed states how superior work is to idle scriptural meditation and fruitless attendance to reading.

4. Cf. the introduction, n.25.
5. Cf. Op.15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, PL145, 346 (noted by Tabacco, VR p.26 n.1).
6. **Ben. Reg.** c.48 may be added to the ancient sources cited by Tabacco (VR, p.26n.2).
7. **Matthew** 13:18-23.
8. **Matthew** 13:36-43. Damian uses the image of the abbot's semen verbi; cf. Brezzi and Nardi, pp. 278-279.
9. A comparison may be made to another kind of ground-breaking on which Damian later commented: "Qui virtutum lapidibus festinat atrium sublime construere, prius eum necesse est inhorrescentia carnalium delectationum dumeta purgare. Unde recte per Salomonem dicitur: 'Diligenter exerce agrum tuum, ut postea aedificies domum tuam' [**Proverbs** 24:27]. Ille quippe bene domum mentis aedificat, qui prius agrum corporis spinis vitiorum purgat; alioquin si desideriorum passionumque carnalium sentes in carnis agro pullulare simuntur, fame boni crescente tota intus virtutum structura collabitur ..." **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1137AB.
10. Cf. Op.15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, PL145, 360, and VR c.45.
11. Exercebant; military-ascetic connotations.
12. Doubling the weight of the fast has much richer connotations than doubling the labour, as had St. Hilarion (noted by Tabacco, VR p.26 n.3). Cf. c.7 section (i).
13. A similar use of the military and agricultural images of asceticism together appears later in Op. 13, **De perfectione monachorum**, Brezzi and Nardi pp. 214-217: "stultus denique miles est, qui satagit viacere, si non studuerit ante pugnare .. Frustratur agricola, si antequam desidavit serere, ambiat triturare; cum constet quia quisquis desiderat frumenta colligere, prius necesse sit frutices simul cum vepribus exstirpare ... ut autem terra ista valeat esse ferax segetum, patiens sit ante ligonum et vomerum, quatenus diversis afflictionum perfectaeque poenitentiae disciplinis exculta, velut uberum proventu frugum, sic adornetur omnium fecunditate virtutum."
14. Cf. c.15 below and Bruno, Vfr. c.2 pp. 717-718.

CHAPTER 7 ROMUALD WRESTLES WITH THE DEVIL

Three divisions may be identified here: (i) the first four sentences (to p.27 l.12), describing the demonic attacks; (ii) the remainder of the chapter except for the last sentence (to p.27 l.27), relating Romuald's taunts of the devil; (iii) the last sentence, a generalising summary.

Damian's argument

(i) The devil attacks.

> The devil, however, used to attack Romuald. Many and varied [were] the temptations [he] let loose, especially at the start of [Romuald's] conversion.[1] He would grasp his mind through many incitements of the vices, recalling into his memory at one moment, for example, [those things] that a vigorous man could acquire in the world and how great [they were], [and] at another moment [those things] that he had already left, [although] not yet after his [death], to be greedily inherited by thankless relatives. Sometimes he would accuse him that what he was doing was very little and of no merit, [and] at other times [would] instil [in him] horror at the greatness of [his] toil [and] promise a long span of life.[2] Oh how often he struck at [his] little cell, aroused him when he was yet scarcely drifting into sleep and diverted him, from that instant when [only] the dusk was falling, to watching all through the night. For about five consecutive years the devil lay on his feet and legs in the night time and weighed [him] down with the figure of a phantasmal weight[3] lest he should easily turn one way or the other. Who could describe how many roaring beasts of vices he endured, [or] how often he drove determinedly hostile spirits to flee with the harshest, most thunderous [rebukes]?

This chapter turns from the physical ascetic endeavour of Cuxa to the spiritual struggle it manifests. Towards the end of the first sentence (in the third sentence as it is translated here) Damian contrives to include three major contemplative terms: **mens**, **memoria** and rapture. For it is in the **mens** that this conflict of holy and diabolical takes place, the four vices listed all being errors of **affectus**, all aimed at the destruction of the **desiderium mentis** of the

preceding chapter.[4] So Damian follows this list of vices with the image of a diabolical attack on the cell, that standard symbol of the contemplative heart, the devil's object being distraction of the saint from rest, symbol of the whole religious life.[5] And yet, at the same time, each of these vices that attack the **mens**, with perhaps one exception, is also a vice of fleshly appetite. The devil attacks the mind through the body. So while he challenges mental resolve with **vitiorum incentiva** he wrestles corporeally with the saint[6] and attempts to weigh him down. "**Corpus enim**", as Augustine had commented on the wisdom literature, "**quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et terrena inhabitatio deprimit sensum multa cogitantem.**"[7] Not only, however, has the ascetic trained himself to throw off such weights; neither does he live in a **terrena inhabitatio.**[8] The cast-out of Heaven has no place in the hermitage, as Romuald is about to remind him. The devil's attacks are ineffectual.

It is this ineffectuality that underlies the insults with which Romuald defends himself:

(ii) Romuald taunts the devil.

> And because of this, if any of the brethren, even though forced by necessity, should go to [his] cell during the time of silence, Christ's soldier, ready as always for the fray, [would] immediately suppose him to be the devil [and] would thunder forth in a clear voice, "Where are you making for now, [you] hideous [thing]? What [is there] for you in a hermitage, [you who have been] thrown out of Heaven? Get out, [you] filthy dog.[9] Vanish, [you] senile snake."[10]

The words of truth and virtue that Romuald has sown in the previous chapter are now his defence against the devil. As he insults him, the reader is enlightened with the answer to the series of questions about Romuald's vocation that Damian has put into the mouth of the devil at

the beginning of the chapter. For if the reader has questioned with the devil whether Romuald's deeds are really of any value and whether the blessings of the world are really not more greatly to be desired, he is now able to reflect on the status of the tempter, not only evil but also defeated, worn out, **veternosus**. Even the devil's very weight is a **typus phantastici**, an illusion.[11] So, in the Augustinian tradition of evil, of evil's existence only as the absence of good[12], the devil's only weapon is trickery, his ploy the promise of a worldly beatitude that he cannot in fact fulfil, distraction from the true beatitude offered to those who trust the promises of God.[13] The devil is the father of lies. Faith is the first object of his attack and faith, as Damian implies in his concluding sentence, is the armour of the attacked:[14]

(iii) Romuald is always ready with faith.

> And so with these words and [others] of this kind he declared that he would always take his stand in the battle-array against malign spirits, and [whenever] the enemy [should] challenge, go out at once to meet them in the field, clad in the arms of faith.[15]

Damian's sources

The first section of this chapter, like Chapter 6, thus appears to be a **melange** of **motifs** from the ascetic written tradition; especially the great images of wrestling with the devil and the armour of God employed by St. Paul in **Ephesians**, Chapter 6, and various images from the **Apocalypse**, Chapter 12, and the **Confessions** of Augustine, 7. The last section is straightforwardly editorial. Only the second section shows any sign of an oral story about Romuald.

Damian clearly wishes Romuald's shouting at the brethren to be

accepted quite literally. The particular insults shouted, however, are themselves so plainly derived from the written tradition about the devil that nothing remains for oral transmission but the shouting. Even here there is a tradition of mocking the devil.[16] Allowing, however, for Damian's protestation that Romuald was clearly heard by his brethren, it is possible that he has used an authentic oral tradition of a shouting Romuald to account for his own otherwise impossible knowledge of an intrinsically intracellular aspect of the master's life, and that, as in previous chapters, the original import of such a story may have been slightly different. Perhaps, in the context of the tradition of the secluded hermit master, Romuald was recalled as fiercely impatient of interruption, no matter what its purpose, during the time reserved for silence.[17] The only shouting recorded, after all, is that directed at the intrusive brethren themselves. However this may be, it seems safe at any rate to conclude that this story need have nothing to do with Cuxa and that neither it nor Damian's use of it can be established as belonging to the tradition of "folly for Christ's sake" that has recently been advanced as an explanation for it.[18]

Literal historicity

Whether or not this story is true to Romuald's life seems beyond determination, but sharp rebukes for disturbers of prescribed silence do not seem improbable.

NOTES

1. Blum, **Peter Damian**, pp.99-100 draws attention to Op.50, **Institutio monialis**, PL145,737B, and summarises Damian: "At no time did he indicate that temptations were confined to the beginning of the religious life. On the contrary, in his opinion the novice usually leads a calm and serene existence,

free from all temptations, so that he is not disheartened in his new profession." Although Romuald will be tempted again when he is more advanced in religion, it is clear that either Damian's opinion had changed by the time he wrote Op.50 or that marvellous Romuald is not to be taken as typical.

2. Tabacco points to a possible source for this in the **Vita Antonii**, 4; VR p.27n.1.
3. Tipo phantastici ponderis.
4. Demonic attack is traditionally manifested first in evil thoughts. cf. **Historia monachorum in Aegypto, 8, 14.**
5. On the association between sleep (an image of both death and refreshment) and the religious concepts of quies and requies, cf. Leclercq, **Otia monastica**, op.cit., pp.18-19.
6. The image of wrestling with the devil is found in Ephesians 6:12, in the course of Paul's explanation of the armour of God. cf. p.31n.4 below.
7. **Liber Sapientiae 9:15; Confessions** 7,17 (cf. also 7,4). Augustine developed the concept of weight to represent the essential force in everything which draws it to its natural place of rest in the ordered hierarchy of all things. In the Christian will this motivating force is love, the upward weight that leads the human soul to seek its teleological rest in God. There are contemplative overtones to this. Cf. E. Gilson, **Introduction to the Study of Augustine**, pp.133-135, and Leclercq, **Otia monastica**, op.cit., pp.23-24. Now that Romuald is so effectively moved by his desiderium mentis, the devil must simultaneously impugn his mental resolve and try to increase his corporeal burden. The wider use of the image of the burdensome body or flesh by Damian is commented upon by Bultot, op.cit., pp.22 ff. Bultot, however, fails to distinguish adequately between body and flesh and so interprets Damian's thought on the relationship between body and soul as to make it seem almost dualist.
8. Romuald would not have asked the devil, "Quid tibi in terra, de coelo deiecte?"
9. On the significance of this insult, cf. c.62, where the image is developed further.
10. Coluber veternose. The principal meaning of veternosus is "lethargic", with associated meaning derived from its original connection with old age.
11. The illusory guises in which demons appear are a hagiographical commonplace. Further phantasms will appear in cc. 16,17,61,62 and 63.
12. Augustine develops this theme in the same book of the **Confessions** in which he speaks of the body weighing down the soul. Cf. 7, 12-13. It is taken up by Damian particularly in Op.36, **De divina omnipotentia.** See especially Cantin, op.cit., pp.164-169 and PL145, 609BC. Cantin does not think that Damian necessarily took this idea directly from any Patristic source. V. Polletti, however, **Pier Damiani e il secolo decimoprimo; Saggio filosofico** (Faezza, 1972), pp.136-7 & 144-5, also citing op.36, believes that he did, and more especially from the Pseudo-Denis. In the present **Life** it can be seen that his use of imagery is very close to Augustine's Book 7.
13. Augustine points out in the **Confessions** 7,16 that wickedness is nothing but perversion of the will away from God to the desire for things outside itself. It is from this that he proceeds to the image of the body's weight.
14. Cf. also Op.15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, PL145,339A-C.

15. Tabacco's reference to the **Vita Antonii** on this point (VR p.27n.3) seems once again to compare Damian's image to a really rather different one, although the theme of faith is constant. The image of the armour of God can be found in **Ephesians** 6:10-17, where faith appears as the most important element although it does not characterise the whole arms as in Damian's image. The fight against the devil is a hagiographical constant but all the principal images employed by Damian can be found in **Apoc.** 12: "Et factum est praelium magno in caelo, Michael (by whose monastery of Cuxa Damian has set this particular manifestation of the conflict) et angeli eius praelinbantur cum dracone ... Et proiectus est draco ille magnus, serpens antiquus qui seducit universum orbem: et proiectus est in terram ... Et ipsi vicerunt eum propter sanguinem Agni, et propter verbum testimonii sui ... Propterea laetamini caeli, et qui habitatis in eis. Vae terrae, et mari, quia descendit diabolus ad vos, habens iram magnam, sciens quod modicum tempus habet ... Et iratus est drace in mulierem (Ecclesia and Maria): et abiit facere praelium cum reliquis de semine eius, qui custodiunt mandata Dei, et habent testimonium Iesu Christi" (vv.7-17).
16. Tabacco points to this in the **Vita Antonii** (VR p.27n.3). In the present chapter, however, there is perhaps a greater earnestness; Romuald's insults carry more bitterness than ridicule. The true tradition of mockery will be more evident in c.17.
17. On the necessity for rigorous silence, cf. Op.15, PL145, 339D-340A and 344BC. Also Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.46.
18. Cf. c.13 section (ii) and c.36.

CHAPTER 8 PETER ORSEOLO FORETELLS THE FUTURE

This chapter divides into three narrative units built upon historical bases of three different kinds: the first two sentences (to p.28 1.6) in which Romuald imitates the fast of the Fathers; the third to sixth sentences (to p.28 1.17) in which he shows discretion to Orseolo; and the remainder of the chapter, in which Orseolo predicts the future to his son. Each of these sections carries a small argument of its own, and the three combine to offer a deeper point.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald fasts as the Fathers.

> Now it happened that at a certain time, [when he was] reading[1] the book of the **Life of the Fathers**[2], he came upon that place where it is recorded that certain brethren [would] fast in solitude throughout the week [but] would gather together on Saturday [to] break the rigour of [their] fast and take food more relaxedly on that day and on Sunday. Romuald immediately assumed this order of life and remained in it with unbroken austerity for some fifteen years or longer.

Thus Damian introduces the third of the four stages of fasting through which Romuald passes in this early section of the **Life**. As in each of the others, this improvement in his ascetic practice is to be associated with a further development of his **magisterium** and **virtus**; in this chapter more particularly with discretion and prophecy. The most striking feature of these sentences, however, is that Damian explicitly names a written source. This is not his normal practice in the work. The probable reason for this is that the custom of fasting here described was later to become the practice of Fonte Avellana for several months of the year.[3] Damian is fixing its authority in regard to both Romuald and its originators.

(ii) Orseolo fails to emulate him.

> Duke Peter, however, because he had been customarily trained on many delicacies, at once succumbed under the weight of so strict a fast. And so he threw himself humbly at the blessed Romuald's feet, and, [when] ordered to rise, shamefully made known to him his compelling need. 'Father', he said, 'because I have a large body, I am not able to sustain myself for my sins on this half of a biscuit.' Romuald, therefore, dutifully compassionate of his fragility, added another quarter to the customary measure of the biscuit. And so he extended the hand of mercy to the now tottering brother, lest he should completely fall aside, and confirmed the journey to the fulfilment of good living which he had begun.

Thus Romuald achieves the **discretio** lacked by his own master Marinus in Chapter 4. This standard requisite of masters of religious[4], common throughout the tradition and emphasised by the two ancient authorities most influential in the West - Cassian and Benedict - is the hallmark of the new status Romuald has achieved in Chapter 6. This is Damian's first opportunity to reveal it. It both confirms and further justifies Romuald's ascendancy over Marinus, and recalls the argument implicit in Chapter 6 - **not** found everywhere in the tradition but at the core of Damian's spirituality - that the merit which justifies a discretionary superiority is to be interpreted as first and foremost prowess in asceticism.

(iii) Orseolo predicts the future to his son.

> [Peter had] a son, his namesake, a man very prudent in the worldly manner, who visited him at a certain time. [And] the father, I know not whether by the spirit of prophecy or by revelation [in] some [other way], predicted to him what was to happen to him. "Know, my son", he said, " without [any] doubt, that you will be appointed duke and that you will prosper. Only just ensure that you preserve for the churches of Christ their rights and that, in relation to [your] subjects, you do not deviate from justice for the love or hate of anyone.

Damian has thus far recorded only unedifying examples of the transgressions of worldly potentates. Now he balances his story with

Peter II Orseolo. He does not specify what the rights of churches are to be considered more precisely to be. Peter's implicit fulfilment of the obligations here enunciated - uncontroversial in themselves - he uses as the mark of an acceptable temporal ruler[5] - though qualifying his approval of his prudence.

The unifying image of the three sections of the chapter is fatherhood, on which is based each of the three sets of relationships through which it proceeds: Romuald and the Fathers; Peter (senior) and Romuald, addressed as "father"; and the two Peters, father and son. The key to the chapter would then seem to be the relationship between this theme of paternity and the two degrees of fasting; it is through this relationship that the central opposition in the chapter is resolved. For it is by his proficient fasting in Chapter 6 that Romuald has been enabled to cope with the weight of the devil in Chapter 7. Peter **dux** (whose worldly status is thus intruded into the hermitage in contrast with **pater** Romuald) is unable to emulate this **virtus**, and yet he is not overcome by any similar attack of the devil upon himself. On the contrary, he is confirmed on his holy journey and is granted at the end of the chapter a divine gift of foresight. This is the central opposition: the stronger man has been in spiritual danger, the weaker is not. The paternal relationship, with its deference on the one side and protectiveness on the other, resolves it. **Humiliter** is the pivotal word. The adversarial dichotomy of heavenly and worldly which pervades the whole of fallen Creation is resolved when the more worldly accepts its proper place in submission to the more heavenly. Doge Peter's new filial status is consonant with the restorative advice offered to him as a usurper in Chapter 5 and takes it one step further than the pupillage hitherto described. Insofar as it concerns him, the fundamental evil of the

great would-be usurper, the devil - the upsetting of the divinely created order - is reversed. Peter can now be granted holiness in his own degree without requiring to repeat for himself his superior's victory. He has been "gathered" to Romuald indeed, such that he may share in the gifts of that **beatus**.

Peter's vocation is thus to the service of Christ in a second order, under the tutelage of the first-order servant. The terms of his **modus vivendi** thus come properly under Romuald's discretion. So the reader learns not only the bare fact that Romuald has been granted the fulness of this virtue, but also something of its theological purpose. In the process, there arises the issue of authority. It is perhaps more than coincidental that discretion and prophecy are both mentioned for the first time in the **Life** together in this chapter. Both concern pronouncements of God's will for men's lives. The authority of any man to pronounce the will of God to others needs in any age to be legitimated, and especially is this so when he stands outside the institutional structure of authority. (For Romuald is not yet even a prior.) It is true that his personal standing as a first-order ascetic of God is the first element in this legitimation and of the first importance to Damian. Like so many in his century - like Hildebrand and the Patarines with whom he was to be associated and concerned - he was scandalised when authoritative office was occupied by the personally unworthy. His special concern over simony and nicolaitism are evident later in the work. But the doctrines of the holy man can never be authoritative if they are new. All Truth is already waiting to be discovered in **Veritas ipsa**, holy writ. The holy man's **virtus** is not for novelty but indeed for **discretio**, the interpretation of the ancient truths for application in present lives. So Romuald's fatherly pronouncement for the life of Peter is anchored

in the **Life of the Fathers.** It is not that he stands in a filial relationship to the Fathers like that of Peter to himself, for he is in the next chapter to alter his own practice on the basis of another ancient exemplar; he is himself the discretionary authority of his own life. On the contrary, he stands, **vis-a-vis** his disciple, **with** the ancient Fathers, but neither such that he is bound slavishly to the letter of their example nor such that the authority of his **magisterium** may be equal to and independent of that example. Discretion may be achieved afresh in such a magisterial life, but it works on the accumulated deposit of holy literature - to which deposit Damian is now adding Romuald's own example.

This **virtus** by which the will of God is made effective is not restricted to the master and his disciple within the confines of the hermitage. At the end of the chapter, Orseolo senior has himself become the **pater** establishing the terms of conduct of the worldly **dux.** Damian hesitates to state that he has been granted the spirit of prophecy. Perhaps he does not wish the pupil to reveal the fulness of a gift that his scheme will not allow for the master until much later in the work. The concept of prophecy, however, he does associate with Peter's statement and it is indeed prophecy in the ancient double sense, at once a declaration of what the future will bring and an instruction to the hearer as to how God's ordained end is to be achieved. The state, for whose communal sin Peter has been undertaking his penance, is implicitly restored through this, like himself, to **iustitia** in its own degree. The restorative **virtus** which thus passes out of the hermitage into the **seculum** beyond is the same discretionary-prophetic **virtus** which has passed from Romuald to Peter. Holy teaching is again the fruit of holy living by the precepts of an earlier holy teaching, and more holy living is the purpose of the new

holy teaching, and the restoration of Venice proceeds from a chain of these stretching into the present from antiquity itself, through Romuald's discretion.

Damian's sources

The opening section of this chapter, in which Romuald models his fasting on the ancient examplar, shows no necessary connection with Cuxa. Nor is it clear in what context it circulated, for it does not very well introduce the story of Orseolo that follows it; it is the distribution of fasting days through the week that is the issue here whereas it is the **quantity** of food allowed that is the problem there. It seems more likely that it was told of in conjunction with the opening section of the next chapter, where Romuald changes his fast under the influence of St. Sylvester, and that the source was an Italian monastery, perhaps Fonte Avellana itself, where these customs were of immediate practical interest.

The story of Orseolo's frailty, although identifying him explicitly, shows no other necessary connection with either him or Cuxa. It could be the story of any such nobleman before any such master in any hermitage. Although Damian uses it to authenticate the **magisterium** of Romuald, it could alternatively be used to promote and justify discretion in fasting; when the models are extreme, it needs to be constantly reiterated that it is not in fact expected that everyone will equal them. It may be suspected, therefore, that a story originally not unlike a parable has hardened into a record of a historical event, with names of persons and place supplied by surmise, as it has passed through the stages of telling.

The concluding story of the young Peter's visit to his father, on the other hand, is clearly an Orseolo story. In the form in which Damian tells it, it could be a disjointed piece of the hagiography of Peter Orseolo the saint (the father), but Damian shows no other sign of awareness in the **Life** that Peter was ever regarded as a saint (in contrast to his eulogy of St. John Gradenigo in chapter 15). It is perhaps, therefore, a redacted version of a story told around Venice in honour of the son; his elevation and good government were prophesied, and thus shown to be celestially approved, by his holy father in the holy hermitage (although on how good was the son, how holy the father and of what status the prophecy, Damian makes it plain he prefers to reserve judgment even as he relates the story).

Literal historicity

It would seem incautious, therefore, to believe that any of the information included in this chapter has really come from Cuxa. If it is not an accurate literal depiction of that hermitage, however, there is no reason to believe that the spirituality attributed to Romuald in it, especially the fasting under the influence of ancient written exemplars and the discretion towards less robust brethren, is false. These characteristics were not limited to the Cuxa period and, especially in the case of the reading of ancient literature, may indeed have begun there.

For Cuxa before 1000 is a famed centre of ancient learning, a home for the lingering spirit of the Carolingian renaissance. It is true that the house was noted largely for its studies in the pagan classics, which are not associated with the name of Romuald, but it is the renaissance spirit itself which is significant. In the next chapter

and again in chapter 35 (dealing with the important matter of the ancient canons against simony) Damian will similarly present Romuald as a transmitter of patristic practice and legislation, in the latter case to heinous sinners quite ignorant of the ancient codes. It is true, moreover, that fairly direct ancient antecedents can be found for all aspects of the spirituality associated with Romuald, and that, in spite of Damian's later efforts to convince his readers that Romualdine eremitism was the true and ultimate intention of St. Benedict's teachings, this spirituality represents a breach with the fundamentally communal and ascetically moderate interpretation of monasticism dominant in the West at least since St. Benedict's time in favour of earlier and more stringent authorities of the East. A literarily-based discretion is in this case of more than conventional importance in Romuald's spirituality and Damian is correctly characterising it. It would clearly follow, however, that the real purpose of Romuald's journey was probably not the accompaniment of Orseolo or the foundation of a new hermitage but study.[6]

NOTES

1. Considering Romuald's ignorance in chapter 4, this suggests, as Franke took for granted, that he learnt to read and write at Cuxa. Citing no evidence, Franke attributed this to a suggestion by Guarin; Franke pp. 97 and 107. In fact, the evidence that Romuald was unable to read when he left Sant'Apollinare is questionable; cf. c.4 n.24.
2. **Vita patrum**, more commonly known as **Vitae patrum**; Damian evidently did not think of their lives as individual.
3. "Ab Idibus vero septembris usque in Pascha Domini, quinque diebus ieiunium sine intermissione tenetur"; Op. 14, **De ordine eremitarum**, PL145, 330B.
4. Cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.45.
5. Blum, **Peter Damian**, pp. 190-91, points out that Damian himself seldom exhorted laymen to enter upon the higher religious practices, apparently satisfied with tokens of ordinary Christian virtue.
6. Franke gave considerable weight to the influence on Romuald (and his later reforms) of Cluniac-associated, scholarly Cuxa; pp.80, 83-85 and especially 86-124. He stressed the influence of Cassian, ancient ecclesiastical canons, and Greek and other eastern hagiography and ascetic works. The influence of Cassian

is corroborated by Bruno of Querfurt, who attributes to John Gradenigo the words, "Hic Romaldus primus nostrorum temporum non propria presumtione, sed secundum Collationes patrum heremitarum per pulchra sublimia humilitate magna vivit et, quae est recta via, nos instruxit." The only evidence adduced by Franke (p.118 n.114) for Romuald's knowledge of the canons is his citation of them against simoniacs and nicolaitists in VR cc.35 and 41 (in which latter the canons are not in fact mentioned) - Cf. c.35 section (ix) below. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.40 n.6 argues that Franke exaggerated the Greek influence.

CHAPTER 9 ROMUALD TEACHES ON FASTING AND PRAYER

This chapter may be divided into four: (i) the first sentence, describing the definitive eremitical fast; (ii) the second sentence, comparing this with choral worship; (iii) the remainder of the first paragraph, recording Romuald's counsel of discretion in fasting; (iv) the second paragraph, on discretion in vigils.

Damian's argument

The first three sections make a single point:

(i) The definitive eremitical fast.

> On a later occasion, however, Romuald read that St. Sylvester, bishop of the city of Rome, had ordained that fasting was to be observed on Saturday, just like the vigils of holy Easter in fact, [and] immediately commuted the Saturday remission to Thursday.[1] And thus, with fine discretion, he made allowance for the frailty of the feeble and rendered the long fast easier. He in fact put forward this rule of living for all [who] pursue the solitary life, that each might then know he kept the fast of the eremitical life if in the course of the week he should take some vegetables or any kind of fluid - with an act of grace - on Thursdays and Sundays, and [so] relieve the three-day and two-day periods. [He] excepted the two quadragesimas of the year [Advent and Lent], during which not only he himself but also many of his disciples were accustomed to continue [their] fast throughout the week.

(ii) It is like choral praise.

> And how fitting indeed it was that he who applied himself always to the praise of God in the choir and with the bell, should resound continually into the ears of the boundless light [those] special chords of harmonic modulation, the octave, the fifth and the fourth.

(iii) Discretion is enjoined.

> To fast totally, however - that is, to pass the day without any food [at all] - he absolutely prohibited to others, although he very often did [so] himself. For he used to say that it most

> thoroughly befitted [anyone] striving for perfection to eat every day and [yet] always go hungry, for this would by gradual habituation lighten the flesh, which seems heavy to novices at the beginning of [their] conversion. And he held it in contempt if anyone should begin something great[2] for a moment and not then persevere in it faithfully.

In this half-chapter Damian comes closest to using the **Life** as a **Rule**, to fix the **conversatio** of the religious of his own community. The practice here described, including the exceptions recommended for Advent and Lent, was followed at Fonte Avellana for the greater part of the year: from the ides of September to Easter.[3] Having in the previous chapter established the **modus operandi** of the saving **virtus** of the saint through the saint's discretion, he now presents a discretionary programme for the largest segment of the year not only more modest than that enjoined on the first beneficiary of this discretion (Romuald's first convert, Orseolo), but quite different in character from the wondrous achievement of the saint himself, especially that of chapter 6. There is to be no total fasting at all. Fasting indeed, although rigorous, has become no more than a regular dietary parsimony undertaken in a devotional spirit:[4] indicated here by the symbolism of the perfect intervals of the music by which God is also glorified. The gap which emerges between the idealised model and the actual expectation from followers is so great that literal imitation of the model is explicitly forbidden. Romuald is in this sense not in the end so much an example of **how** as an incarnate argument as to **why** one undertakes the eremitical life. For certainly the sense of participation in the same spiritual progress as the saint survives the relaxation of the regime, especially in the reassertion of the relationship between fasting and prayer, that foremost of saintly services. In the first chapter of the **Life** the young Romuald was predestined to the achievement of an unspecified **magnum aliquid**. Now any brother who perseveres in the fast may know that he has

himself achieved a **magnum quid.**

(iv) Discretion in vigils.

> [As to] vigils, moreover, he urged strongly that they should be undertaken with restraint and great discretion, lest it should befall anyone that he yield to sleep after the performance of the night offices. Truly did the holy man detest sleep of this kind so greatly that if anyone should confess to him to have fallen asleep after the twelfth vigil of the psalms or especially at about dawn, he would by no means be permitted by him to celebrate the sacred rites of the mass that day. For he used to say that it were better, were it possible, to chant one psalm from the heart and with compunction, than to run through a hundred with pretended devotion.[5] He would exhort anyone to whom this grace was not perfectly granted by no means to despair; and by no means either to become tepid in the bodily training itself, until He Who granted the will would apportion also in time the facility. The purpose of [his] mind, once fixed on God, would suffice to protect the incense of his prayer, which the wind of external cogitations would disturb. For where the purpose is right, the [attack] of cogitation upon the will is not greatly to be feared.

Thus Damian turns in the latter half of the chapter from legislator to pastor. Having described a first-order servant of God whose example is the guide of his followers and yet at the same time beyond emulation, he must now guard not only against the unrealistic ambition of the devoted but also against its companion, despair. A spirituality based on asceticism and inspired by the miraculous lives of saints will always be troubled by these twin dangers. Damian reintroduces the theme of compunction to explain and justify the discretion which is now guardian against both these evils; when sincerity of intention is the principal virtue, he who is sincere need never despair of his achievements, and he who seeks to achieve too much must know that it will be of negative value if he cannot maintain his intensity. This association of discretion and compunction is taken, as Tabacco notes, from Cassian.[6] The implications of the two authors are in fact, however, slightly different. For Cassian writes that the extremes of satiety and excessive abstinence meet, insofar as

both weaken a man and thereby lay him open to previously controlled passion. He describes compunction as a saviour from satiety but not from excessive abstinence. The goal is thus the maintenance of reasonable abstinence for the sake of passion-control; compunction is not itself the goal. Damian's priority is reversed: maintainable abstinence is the guarantee of maintained sincerity. Those who cannot emulate Romuald in his abstinence must not - and like Orseolo, need not - try.

Perhaps, however, the most important sentence of this chapter is the last, for on the sentiment there expressed hangs the whole theory of the **conversatio** which the present chapter is partially regulating. For the holy application of mind of which Damian writes is indeed an **intentio fixa**, a kind of holy fixation. Every contemplative aimed to achieve a life so devoted to God that nothing was of any concern outside its involvement in His worship and service. Concupiscence, the patristic fundamental vice of the love of created things in themselves instead of for their Creator, was to be combated incessantly until the constant joyous serenity which is the image in man of the immutability and impassibility of God was achieved; this hallmark of the **beatus** is observed in Romuald later in the **Life**. For this reason, any thought which distracted the Christian from total attention to God towards the world was to be regarded as evil. It has already been seen in chapters 3 and 7 how the weapons of the devil are false promises of worldly beatitude and memories of a worldly past: the demons, the **maligni spiritus**, are to this extent indeed themselves **cogitationes**. If, however, a regime of abstinence is pursued to minimise distraction and the occasions of concupiscence, a fitful abstinence will produce a fitful devotion, the very antithesis of the

heavenly model. So what is to be pursued in the monasteries and hermitages is the maximum of maintainable abstinence and constancy of devotion taken jointly.

Damian's sources

The second of the four sections into which this chapter has been divided is straightforwardly editorial. Although they are all quite plausible, none of the other three is in the form of a story that could have circulated orally. They are all clearly Damian's own summaries, the first based on the written authority of St. Sylvester[7] and on Fonte Avellana practice in Damian's own time, the third on the various written authorities on fasting noted by Tabacco, and the fourth primarily on the written authority of Cassian, although with Damian's own slant on it. In all three cases Damian is no doubt motivated at least as much by his own experience of the matters in question as by his desire to record the teaching of Romuald.

Literal historicity

To what extent the chapter reflects the authentic Romuald depends on the degree to which the communities associated with his name actually remembered his teachings and preserved his observances up to Damian's time of writing, and on his own attitude to the earlier authorities drawn on by Damian. As to the former question, Romuald's work did not fruit in written rules and formal constitutions, but because the practices concerned were already enshrined in ancient written authorities, the two questions may be treated as in fact really one. It was suggested in relation to the previous chapter that Romuald's spirituality may indeed have been based on a particular deference to ancient ascetic literature, and John Gradenigo's evidence is that it

was especially to Cassian. Therefore, although it cannot be determined that he fasted just as here described, and Damian's escape clause that he often fasted differently from the rule he prescribed for others might serve to cover the author's ignorance on the point, the older saint is probably fairly represented in this chapter at least in spirit.

NOTES

1. Cf. Op.55, **De celebrandis vigiliis**, PL145, 803A-804A; also Op. 54.
2. Magnum quid.
3. Cf. Op.14, **De ordine eremitarum**, & Op.15, **De suae congregatis institutis**, PL145, 327D-336B, especially 330A-D.
4. PL145, 330D; cf. n. 3 above.
5. Fabulatio mentis. On this problem cf. Lawrence, pp.99-100.
6. Although **Coll.** II, 16 is perhaps more important than the II, 17 Tabacco notes.
7. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp.33-34, comments that the described use of St. Sylvester on fasting is the same as Damian's own.

CHAPTER 10 THE DOWNFALL OF A RAPACIOUS COUNT

This chapter is most usefully regarded as a single unit:

> And at a certain time, while he yet remained in Gallic parts, he had as his domestic help[1] a certain farmer, who sometimes used to make for him utensils of which he had need in his cell. A man richer in charity than in possessions, [this farmer] also served him cheerfully, out of the scanty resources of his own poverty, with whatever else might be suitable. He had a cow, which a certain proud and bloated count despatched his household servants[2] to carry off in a savage attack. The flesh of this [cow the count] then ordered, with the keenest gluttony, to be prepared for his dinner. But lo, the peasant sped to Romuald's cell, shouted out the cause of his downfall, clamorous [in his] cries, [and] made passionate plaint that his own hope[3] and [the hope] of his house had been taken away. And so St. Romuald sent a messenger to that count at an urgent pace, and requested with most humble supplication that the pauper's animal be returned to him. The shifty count spat back at these pleas in an impudent spirit, asserting that they could have the savour of the fat cow's loin, because he was going to partake of it that very day. And [so when] the dinner hour came the flesh of the stolen cow was placed upon the table. The sentence of divine revenge now hung over the count. He cut for himself a piece of the bovine kidney, placed [it] in [his] mouth [and] just began to eat. And suddenly, there it stuck in his throat, so immovably that it could neither go down into the interior nor by any exertion be cast out. And so the entrance to his windpipe [4] [was] sealed off, [and] he died between his own hands a terrible death. And whereas he had wished, in opposition to God's servant, to fulfil to saturation the concupiscence of the flesh, instead, by the righteous judgment of God he lost the carnal life [while] yet [in his] fast.

Damian's argument

This chapter is the first in the **Life** to relate an apparent "miracle of judgment." A sinner is destroyed because he disobeys the authority of God's saint, which authority is divinely authenticated thereby. A depredator of the property of the saint's **familiaris** receives an exemplary punishment which all who may thereafter contemplate the depredation of property associated with Romuald might ponder.

Such a "miracle of judgment", however, is of only superficial value in

the present context. The peasant has not had his cow restored to him; the count has lost his life, and, as he has died in his sin, the fate of his soul does not appear beatific; God, Who loveth righteousness and willeth that no man should perish but that all should be saved, has found His saving servant impotent in this instance. Romuald has defeated the devil and restored Venice, but such **virtus** is of no use to him now.

The story is more meaningful in the context of Damian's developing spiritual argument if it is read not as an account of one event in time but as a parable completing his argument concerning fasting - which has stood representative of the whole ascetic life of prayer - with a consideration of the contrary spiritual process affecting those who yield to the opposite, gluttony. Damian is again using the technique of radical contrast, and the chapter can in fact be seen to be constructed upon a series of oppositions which establish the count as Romuald's own negative equivalent. The status of the count as nobleman reintroduces the contrast between the two kinds of greatness between which Romuald chose in the first chapter. The Romuald who opposes him is now himself a lordly one, the conflict between these two models of behaviour being worked out through their respective retainers, the saint's **familiaris** and messenger, and the count's **parasiti**. In spite of Damian's explanation of how little the **familiaris** did for him, this image is quite different from that of the self-sufficient ascetic **magister** which he has been using hitherto. It represents the intrusion of an alternative conventional image of a saint required by Damian for this one point. Its principal value is to allow those who continued at the time of writing to serve the saint cheerfully and charitably out of what little they had - the brethren of such subsequent foundations as Fonte Avellana itself - to see

themselves in this predecessor.

The allegory of the parable grows from that association. The **spes** of which the cow is the symbol and of which the **familiaris** and his house are despoiled can then be understood in its fuller sense and with its wider ramifications. The Christian "hope" or expectation, **spes** is described elsewhere by Damian as the third of the six wings of the Christian. It is paired with the fourth, the fear of God and of death.[5] It is this fourth which saves the Christian from storing up for himself "wrath on the day of wrath and of the revelation of the **righteous judgment of God**": **"Quia igitur spes multum praesumit"**, Damian explains, **"et timor diffidit nimis, utrumque iungere non moreris, ut in communi faciant quod divisa non possunt. Disce sic sperare ut timeas: sic timere, ut speres. De his scriptum est: 'Duae pennae singulorum iungebantur'."**[6] The evil count has hope without fear, stolen hope, which is presumption.

But in another sense the hope of Israel is God Himself: **"Deus itaque, qui principium gloriae, ipse est exspectatio Israel."**[7] In this case, the feast of the wicked on the stolen hope is a parody of the Christian feast on Christ Himself, the Eucharist, which is a feast on the Lamb of God. For the sacrifice by which Aaron and the sons of Aaron were consecrated to the priesthood and by which they made peace offerings on behalf of others was a burnt offering of a bullock, a ram, lamb or kid, prefigurative of the Eucharist, in which the kidneys and the fat which is by the flanks are particularly to be offered. It is for this reason that it is not for the theft itself, nor even at the moment of the refusal to return the animal as the saint requests, that the count is judged, but when he places the kidney in his mouth: **"Qui enim manducat et bibit indigne, iudicium sibi manducat et**

bibit...".

The presumption of the count destroys the true hope of the **familiaris** of the saint, for if even such as the count may expect to feast with God, what more is there for the faithful servant? In the destruction of the count and his presumption this hope is - unlike the literal cow - returned to the **familiaris**, now suitably tempered with the **timor** of God and of death.

Romuald's **virtus** to save can now be seen to be in fact uncompromised by this story. For as a parable of a perduring truth, not the record of a particular event, no miracle, in the sense of a particular divine intervention, is required to explain it. The two channels of this life, the **gula** and the **spiramen**, exist in such proximity that gluttony will **always** block the channel of the breath of life. Concupiscence and spirituality can not accommodate each other. This is no more than another manifestation of the all-pervading conflict of the carnal and the spiritual. So the divine revenge which the count brings upon himself is already **implicit** in carnality. How appropriate it is that it is indeed a piece of flesh which acts as the agent of the revenge. What here occurs is to this extent indeed no particular divine intervention, but the working out of a divine **prescription.** The fate of the count is predictable and, barring a miracle, inevitable. He is not an individual but a type. Far from failing, Romuald's **virtus** to save will intervene to rescue from his sins a real count in the next chapter.

Damian's sources

This chapter, as it stands, is to be accounted to Damian himself. It

is, however, a hagiographical story of a common kind, similar as a narrative to another bovine theft story he will tell in chapter 71 and to two others he later recorded about St. Ruffinus.[8] It certainly retains the form of an orally transmissible story, economical, arresting, arousing and memorable; and as for function, the fear of saints and of God was frequently used to protect property, a threat of that kind, although not really relevant to Damian's point, surviving here in his allegorised redaction. It has therefore probably been adapted from an oral source.

Literal historicity

There is no sign of any necessary connection with Cuxa and it is not at all clear who would have carried the story to northern Italy if it had in fact originated there. Furthermore, there is no other evidence that Romuald was ever concerned with anyone's property in quite this way; and as he does nothing even here but send a messenger to the count to say "you mustn't" (the count's death is directly divine punishment, not a work of sorcery on Romuald's part), he is scarcely involved in the matter except as an invoked name, the story reading very like that of chapter 71, where he is invoked after his death, and innumerable other interventions by saints already in Heaven. It seems likely, therefore, that this was in fact originally an Italian story of a posthumous work that had lost its inessential date and place details and had new ones supplied by guesswork. However this may be, it must at least be considered an unreliable depiction of the young ascetic and his social position at Cuxa.

This chapter completes the five about Romuald's sojourn at Cuxa, five chapters of concentrated argument about the spiritual life apparently

based on undateable reminiscences or even no information about Romuald at all. The next five turn to the saving consequences of this ascetic prowess for a series of named individuals, and to Romuald's return to Italy, and contain a larger element of literal historicity.

NOTES

1. Familiaris.
2. Niermeyer cites this passage as evidence that parasitus could mean "domestic servant".
3. Spes.
4. Spiramen.
5. **Sermo** 52, PL144, 799 CD: "Tertia ala est spes. Haec est, quae fragiles animos erigit ad superna, quae taedium exspectationis levigat, quae praesumit de misericordia iudicis, et in divina pietatis observatur palatio. Quarta est timor. Iste est, qui succurrit carneam vestem nostram ossa penetrans et ipsis se infundens medullis. Offer paululum oculis cordis imaginem Domini, et illius Domini, qui fecit coelum et terram, qui potestatem habet corpus et animam mittere in gehennam (**Matthew** 10:28); cuius patientiam provocasti, thesaurizare iram in die irae et revelationis iusti iudicii Dei (**Romans** 2:5). Cum haec intuitu diligentiori prospexeris, timor et tremor venient super te, et formido mortis interiorem hominem validius intervertet (**Psalm** 54:6). Quia igitur spes multum praesumit ...
6. Ibid.
7. **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1165C.
8. **Sermo** 36, PL144, 696D-697C.

CHAPTER 11 THE CONVERSION OF COUNT OLIBA

The first sentence and last half-sentence here, although slight, are historically based. The remainder is of uncertain status. The chapter may therefore be divided into three, although the argument is single:

(i) Oliba is introduced.

> There was in the same part of Gaul a certain other count, named Oliba, under whose authority the aforesaid Guarin's monastery lay.

(ii) Romuald counsels him to enter religion.

> [This man] was indeed elevated to a lofty pinnacle of earthly power, but he was weighed down by a great bulk of sins. One day he came to Romuald, thanks to a visitation[1], and as everybody else waited outside the little cell, [Oliba] began, alone with the alone, to give an account of his deeds as though in confession. [When he] had heard what he had to say, the venerable man replied that it was impossible for him to be saved unless [he should] leave the world [and] resort at once to a monastery. Now [when he heard this], it mentally agitated the count [and] he said that his own spiritual men, who knew what [he had] done, had in fact most certainly not expressed [any] such opinion, or at any time urged on him [any] thing so unbearable. And so the bishops and abbots who had come with him [were] admitted [and] he began earnestly inquiring of [them] collectively whether his circumstances were such as the servant of God testified. And they all confirmed the blessed Romuald's sentence [as] with one voice, excusing themselves for not having said the same to the count before [on the grounds that] fear had held [them] back. Then the count dismissed them all [and] intently pursued the matter in private counsel with the blessed Romuald.

(iii) He is to go to Monte Cassino.

> [Romuald's counsel was] that he go to Monte Cassino under the pretext of prayer and irrevocably devote himself to divine servitude in the monastery of St. Benedict.

Damian's argument

The several salvations recounted in the five chapters beginning with this one include a case that necessitates and explains Romuald's return to Italy. The salvation of Oliba that is the subject of this chapter, Damian will suggest in the next, would itself have taken him to Monte Cassino had a more pressing need not required him to go to Ravenna instead. The return to Italy is thus prepared for. This chapter also introduces a character, in Count Oliba, who will be required incidentally in the subsequent story of the sanctification of John Gradenigo in chapter 15. For these reasons it has probably been included largely as straightforward narrative, introducing the new series of chapters. This, however, does not interrupt the over-arching argument about the spiritual life, which now turns to the concept of **consilium**, to both the role of the saint as counsellor and the particular counsel offered.

The function of a holy man as counsellor is one of the great traditional **raisons d'etre** of eremitical sanctity. The **virtus** from which inspired counsel springs is the same as that from which has sprung the saintly discretion towards brethren living under Romuald's own **magisterium** and after his own eremitical model in the preceding chapters. This **virtus** is now turned outward, after other counsellors have failed, to one who is neither a hermit nor to become a hermit. The model hermit is supreme (among mortals) in the spiritual order, and as the **Life** unfolds his saving **virtus** will extend to one category of Christian after another, and even to pagans. The coenobitic conversion counsel is offered to Count Oliba inside the eremitical cell, the essential symbol of eremitism. The bishops and abbots remain outside, except for the moment for which they are admitted to

confirm the counsel. Romuald's superiority to prelates whose spiritual authority is merely institutional and not vivified by their own **conversatio**, over these bishops and abbots who can authenticate but not pronounce the counsel he gives, is clearly implied. He will have abbots and even archbishops as subordinates in later chapters.

The superiority is discreetly presented. Damian does not suggest that the authorities at Cuxa are evil or in error. Romuald has no dispute with them. They are all correct and all agreed. But Oliba would perish if left to them, for they are not able to convert the magisterial knowledge that they share with the holy hermit into the same **virtus** to save. The explanation given is precisely the difference between reclusion and religion in the world: where Romuald bears **spes**, tempered with the **timor** of the vengeance of God, the bishops and abbots are in **terror** of a worldly power.

Damian's sources

The bulk of this chapter - the second section as it is divided above, comprising all but the first sentence and last half-sentence - is of unclear origin. In form, it is a conversion story that could have been told in memory of either the convert or the counsellor in a monastery where both their names were known; at Monte Cassino, for example. It presents a problem, however, in that it contains no details peculiar to either this convert or even this counsellor. Such details are to be found in only the preceding sentence and following half-sentence. Taken on its own, exactly as it stands, the conversion story proper could apply to any equally great count visiting Romuald at any hermitage; the visitor is not named within these sentences, he makes only a general visitation on no particular occasion, his sins

are not specified, the bishops and abbots in his train are not named or numbered, and the identity of the monastery to which he must resort is kept back from them to be given later in secret. If Romuald's own name, moreover, were set aside, his role could be played by any holy man who believed in monastic conversion as a remedy for sin. A typical magnate of the world is counselled by a model hermit. It is therefore questionable whether this story ever circulated in memory of Oliba and Romuald or whether it has been created for the **Life**.

For it does seem possible that Damian could have deduced it himself from general principles. He knew or assumed from information recorded in chapter 15 that Oliba made a monastic conversion at Monte Cassino. He knew that Romuald, because of his status as shining hermit saint, was the principal religious figure wherever he went; hence, any conversion at Cuxa while Romuald was there was effected through him, just as that saint, even in his youth, had participated in Doge Peter's conversion while living near Venice. He knew that the hermit's cell was the focal point of the whole religious life and, in a sense, the source of eremitical **virtus** and therefore the very most appropriate place for religious counsel to be offered; perhaps also that laymen more commonly visited hermits than **vice versa**. He will describe in chapter 40 how the very appearance of Romuald used to put the fear of God into great men of the world, such that they did not know what to say to make excuses for themselves; hence, Oliba would have broken into confession no matter for what purpose he had visited the saint. It is not clear whether Damian knew the historical fact that Cuxa was a major regional centre of the religious life and its study and reform, but a great count could in any case be supposed to have patronised more than one abbot and bishop and it was evident that he had not been converted through any such prelates. Their

confirmation of the counsel, however, could certainly be assumed, because what Romuald said was the simple truth, in no way novel, unorthodox or at variance with the opinion of prelates, and it has already been established with Peter Orseolo in chapter 5 that great men of the world were reluctant to be converted and would seek second opinions. Deduction could thus supply the whole section.

The chapter provides no clear evidence as to Damian's source for the first and third sections. It is likely, however, to be the same source that supplied information about Guarin and Oliba's journey to Monte Cassino in chapter 15. It is significant that in Damian's account of that journey neither Guarin nor Oliba actually arrives at Monte Cassino. Guarin decides **en route** to go to Jerusalem instead, after which Oliba simply vanishes from the story, presumably somewhere in Italy. Oliba's conversion and life at the great monastery, in contrast to John Gradenigo's, is not described at all. Although inconclusive, this is perhaps evidence that Damian's information about Oliba did not come from Monte Cassino. There is no sign in the **Life** that he had any information directly from Cuxa. There may be a clue to the source, however, in Romuald's instruction to the count to go to Monte Cassino not openly but **sub praetextu orationis.** This presumably means in simulation of a pilgrimage and suggests that Damian has worked from a brief record of a pilgrimage. D'Abadal i de Vinyals proposed that Guarin and Oliba were in Rome together in 968. On such a journey, or on any similar one at a later date, no doubt undertaken in Guarin's customary pilgrim manner, the two would almost certainly have travelled by way of various north Italian monasteries. The much-travelled abbot seems to have impressed himself on the Italian monastic consciousness in his time, and the identity of his great

companion would have caused a visit by the two of them to be remembered in a monastery more than fleetingly. 968 was still just within living memory at Damian's date of writing (1042) and he may first have heard of Oliba some years before he wrote; or of a later journey. In the next chapter, and again in chapter 15, Damian will relate how it was in the event indeed Guarin - with John Gradenigo, whom he certainly knew to have become a permanent resident of Monte Cassino - and not Romuald himself who escorted Oliba from Cuxa. Every named character with whom Romuald has been associated at Cuxa - Marinus, Guarin, Orseolo, Gradenigo - and also his father Sergius, who has been converted in Italy in the meantime, reappears between chapters 12 and 15 in a kind of summary of their respective ends; all of which are set in immediate relation to Romuald's departure from Cuxa as though he were the focus of all their lives, and in the process are presented also, with unconvincing coherence, as all interconnected with each other.[2] Knowing from where Oliba came and with whom he was once - **sub pretextu orationis** - headed south through Italy to Monte Cassino would be sufficient for an enthusiastic Damian to include him in this list of those saved through Romuald.

Literal historicity

However all this may be, it can be concluded that there is no satisfactory evidence that Romuald ever meant very much to Count Oliba or that there was any association between Oliba's presence in Italy and Romuald's return to that country. The use by historians of dates at which Oliba is known to have been still at home as a way of establishing the date of Romuald's departure from Cuxa - put by Franke, for example, about 988[3] - therefore appears to be weakly based.

NOTES

1. Or "for the sake of a visitation", but with connotations of divine favour to himself, who is about to be saved; gratia visitationis.
2. The **Life** is thus rounded off to this point so neatly that chapter 16 is almost a new beginning.
3. Franke therefore argued that Romuald was fully ten years at Cuxa; pp. 56-63 and 85, especially 60-62. Cf. Tabacco, however, VR p.34n.1; none of the arguments seems very conclusive.

CHAPTER 12 ROMUALD MUST RETURN TO ITALY

Four historiographical divisions may be made here: (i) the first two sentences (to p.33 l.16), describing Sergius's spiritual peril; (ii) the third sentence (to p.34 l.2), in which Romuald decides he must leave the brethren at Cuxa to return to his father; (iii) the fourth sentence (to p.34 l.2), noting Orseolo's death; (iv) the final sentence, in which Oliba is committed to Gradenigo to be taken to Monte Cassino.

This chapter contains no spiritual argument but has been contrived from three possibly disparate pieces of information to explain what follows in the narrative up to Gradenigo's disobedience and sanctification in chapter 15. It can therefore be read quite straightforwardly and the study move immediately to consider Damian's sources.

(i) Sergius wants to leave San Severo.

> Meanwhile Sergius, Romuald's father, had become a monk, but some time afterwards, won round by the devil, repented the conversion he had made and sought to return into Egypt.[1] The monks of the community of San Severo, which is located not very far from the city of Ravenna [and which is] where Sergius was living, in body although not in heart[2], took pains to inform the blessed Romuald of this immediately by messenger.

(ii) Romuald decides to go to him.

> Smitten by this adverse report, [Romuald] decided that it was necessary that Abbot Guarin and John Gradenigo proceed with the count to his conversion, but that he himself should take relief at once to his father [as he was] perishing.

(iii) Orseolo is already dead.

> Duke Peter's last day had in fact already closed,

felicitously.[3]

(iv) Gradenigo must get Oliba to Monte Cassino.

> And so he entrusted the count to these two on their promise to safeguard [him][4] - to each of them, indeed, but particularly to John, who was subordinate to him - especially ordering, in [the name of] obedience, that even if Guarin should depart, [John] would never separate from the count.

Damian's sources

None of the four sections identified here could function as a story on its own. Nor could the chapter as a whole, which is simultaneously a conclusion and an introduction. All four pieces of information are therefore either disjointed fragments of stories or deductions.

The remainder of the story about Sergius (the first section) appears in the next two chapters. As it takes place in a monastery Romuald had no other apparent reason to visit, it is not unlikely that it was introduced by a comment on how he came to be there, although this depends on the status of that story itself, which will be considered further in relation to those chapters. In any case, these sentences show no necessary connection with Cuxa (Romuald could all the more conveniently have been sent for at Sant 'Apollinare or somewhere else near Ravenna) and there is no reason to believe that the story of Sergius at San Severo was originally told in any connection with Romuald's return from the Pyrenees.

The second section, in which Romuald decides that he cannot take Oliba to Monte Cassino, and the fourth section, in which he entrusts the count particularly to John, go together with each other and with chapter 15, forming a displaced introduction to the third section of

that chapter. It will be argued there that the story, although possibly of oral origin at Monte Cassino, has been heavily edited to make his own point, and if that is true then these present sections are certainly editorial. It was argued in the last chapter that Romuald's part in Oliba's conversion is in fact uncertain, and Damian's failure now to establish any reason why Romuald could not have travelled with Oliba, Guarin and Gradenigo at least as far as northern Italy may be taken as further evidence that the stories of Romuald's journey and of Oliba's were not originally related.

As for the third section, the virtual footnote explaining why Romuald did not have to concern himself with Orseolo, it is very unclear how Damian knew this. If he had heard a story describing the felicitous death of the great convert that he mentions, it is surprising that he does not record any of it. It seems quite possible that he simply deduced that Orseolo was already dead from the fact that he did not return to Italy when Romuald's hermitage broke up.

Literal historicity

What really happened at Cuxa and why and when Romuald returned to Italy seem beyond recall. Tabacco notes various inconclusive arguments, including the possibility that the hermitage broke up when Orseolo died, because his conversion was the cause of the Italian colony there.[5]

NOTES

1. Egypt clearly symbolises the world. Bultot, op.cit., pp.31-32 points out that Damian distinguished between the Israelite soul, which lives the sabbatical life of contemplation, and the Egyptian soul, which neglects the one for the multiple (God for the world). Cf. especially Ep.4, 16, PL144, 331-336.
2. Cor.

3. Literally: "Duke Peter, moreover, had already felicitously closed his last day."
4. In eorum fide.
5. VR p.34n.1.

CHAPTER 13 ROMUALD OUTWITS ASSASSINS AND CURES SERGIUS

Two scarcely related stories begin and end this chapter, separated by a comment on the first and a "bridge passage". The chapter may therefore be divided into four: (i) the first three sentences (to p.35 l.11), in which Romuald feigns madness; (ii) the fourth and fifth sentences (to p.35 l.15), making the comment; (iii) the first half of the last sentence (to p.35 l.18), in which Romuald returns to Ravenna; (iv) the last half-sentence, in which he saves Sergius.

Damian's argument

The first story and the comment on it are most conveniently considered together:

(i) The Pyreneans would murder Romuald to keep him.

> Now [when] the inhabitants of that region heard that Romuald had decided to depart, they were greatly agitated by [their] grief and they considered among themselves how they might restrain him from this intention. In the end, what seemed most effective to them was to send assassins to kill him - [theirs was] an impious piety - so that although they could not retain him alive, they would have at least [his] lifeless corpse for the patronage of [their] land. But Romuald [became] aware of this. He shaved his head all over and when those who were to carry out this plan approached his little cell - at about the first light of dawn - he began to eat as though with avid desire. And seeing this, they believed [him to be] out of [his] mind and, supposing that [his] mind was wounded, scorned to wound [his] body.

(ii) His wise folly saves the day.

> And so in this way, in this way indeed, did the prudent folly of the spiritual David overcome the stupid astuteness of the carnally wise. For he both checked those who would sin and, without fearing death, deflected the danger of death onto the pile of his merits.

This response of feigned madness to true folly reintroduces (from the

prologue) the theme of true and false wisdom, the great Pauline theme of the folly of the Cross. Damian's presentation of Romuald in this way places the saint - for the extent of this chapter - within the tradition of "holy fools", of those who live in a state of feigned (or in some cases, actual) madness for religious ends - an extreme expression of the Pauline argument which applies in lesser degrees to all Christians: he who adopts Christ is a fool in this world. Tabacco notes some early examples of such behaviour.[1] John Saward places Romuald firmly within this tradition in his overview of its history.

The image of Romuald as holy fool thus presented is not in itself particularly appropriate, however; the madness feigned is for one occasion only, is based in an act not typical of, but indeed antithetical to, the norm of his **conversatio**, and is originally presented to an extremely limited audience, including no religious. It seems to be ephemeral, unconnected to the images of the ascetic master of converts which precede and follow it, and not in the main stream of the tradition.

Damian compares Romuald's case with King David's. If recourse is made to his preaching on this, it is found to be explained in terms of Christological soteriology:

> **Nonne etiam vero David, Redemptori nostro, simile quid accidit, ut insanus ab insanientibus putaretur ...? Factus est ergo Redemptor noster infirmus, ut nos fortes efficeret; visus est stultus, ut ad veram sapientiam revocaret. Unde dicit Apostolus: Quia quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus. Et paulo superius: Quia non agnovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes.**[2]

Romuald is about to advance to a new stage in his service of Christ

Redeemer, that of opening the very gates of Heaven for another's entry by what the first sentence of the next chapter calls his "**sane mentis consilium**" - a form of preaching. The infirmity through which Christ created the saving **virtus** of His own indicated in the David quotation, resulted in His death on the Cross and His acceptance of entombment in the Holy Sepulchre, followed by His victory over death in the Resurrection and His cheating the devil of his prize in springing loose from the sepulchre. Romuald must himself participate in this, must in merit accept death and yet cheat it of its victory,[3] before he can release Sergius from the devil's deadly clutch. So Damian explains the feigned madness in terms of that other great hagiographical tradition, martyrdom **in voto**: "he ... without fearing death deflected the danger of death onto the pile of his merits." Sergius can now be saved through the merits of Romuald; whose virtual sepulture will be considered more fully in later chapters.

(iii) He returns to Ravenna.

> [They] then let [Romuald] exercise [his] faculties unhindered [and] he came - not carried by horse, not conveyed by vehicle, but bearing only a staff in his hand, the soles of his feet bare - from the furthermost parts of Gaul all the way to Ravenna.

Romuald appears here in standard ascetic imagery, suggestive of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, realistic also to his own period and quite possibly authentic to his individual character. The emphasis on his travel by foot may serve additionally to contrast him with Abbot Guarin, whose horseback travel will figure in chapter 15. The real reason Damian introduces the feet and rod imagery just here, however, is probably to tie the journey in with the means of Sergius's chastisement:

(iv) Romuald saves Sergius.

> There he ascertained [that his] father wished to revert to the world, bound his feet stoutly in wood, beat him with hard blows and subdued his body by pious severity for a long time, until, as God cured [him], [Romuald] restored his mind to a healthy[12] condition.

Thus he who has been seen to be insane heals the truly insane; whose bare feet on the journey signify his ascetic status[4] binds **"in ligno"** - to the Cross, to the tree of life[5] - the feet of him who would journey back to the world, to sure spiritual death.

Most significant is Romuald's support by only a staff and his treatment of Sergius with blows. **"Virga tua, et baculus tuus, ipsa me consolata sunt"**, says the psalmist.[6] It is the single power of the one rod that supports Romuald on his journey and then corrects Sergius. Damian thus returns to the multifariously significant rod imagery of chapter 4. The rod, as was noted in relation to Marinus's blows on Romuald himself in that chapter, represents the power and wisdom of Christ and His incarnation. In representing the incarnation, the rod comes to symbolise also His mortality. This Old Testament imagery is explained by Damian in the same sermon as King David's above-quoted madness. One paragraph there separates the two, a paragraph concerning once again the transfer of the infirmity of men onto Christ and their transformation in His strength. In Damian's exposition of Judah's pledge to Tamar, moreover, the staff of the hand becomes the symbol of the **requies spei:**

> **per baculum vero designatur requies spei ... Armillam vero laboris exigebat** [John the Baptist], **cum diceret: "Poenitentiam agite."** Baculi quoque requiem, cum praesto subiungeret: "Appropinquavit enim regnum coelorum".[7] **Ac si perspicue loqueretur: Nolite sub iniunctae vobis poenitentiae labore lassessere, sed potius firma spe de regni coelestis appropinquatione animum roborate.**[8]

It is through just such penitence that Sergius is about to pass into this heavenly kingdom. It comes to him from the staff that is Romuald's support on his journey of asceticism.

Damian's sources

The two stories of the chapter evidently spring from quite distinct origins.

The story of the feigned madness has many antecedents in Christian literature and in the Old Testament. As Damian could not have deduced it, however, it must also have an oral origin. Quite what this might have been it seems difficult to say, but it is questionable whether the story is now in its original form. For the Scriptural exemplars of head-shaving concern the cleansing rites of lepers and of Nazirites defiled by corpses or making offerings, the weakening of Samson, signs of the coming of Immanuel, the punishment of Jerusalem, bitter lamentation and the solemn taking of vows.[9] Madness does not come into it. (David's madness did not involve head-shaving.[10]) Romuald's head-shaving therefore cannot be regarded as intrinsically or obviously mad and it is clear that Damian has in fact taken pains in his presentation of it to ensure that it is understood that way. Similarly, only the avidness makes the eating appear mad. In fact eating butter and honey appears with the head-shaving of the Isaiah prophecy of Immanuel.[11] There is therefore reason to doubt that the story of Romuald's combined shaving and eating (although what he ate is not here specified) had always been told with its present cast.

It is also difficult to believe that it came from Cuxa. For no witness is given except the local murderers themselves and none of

Romuald's fellow members of the Cuxa hermitage in any case returned to north-eastern Italy; it turns out in chapter 15 that Peter Orseolo died at Cuxa, Marinus went to Apulia and John Gradeniga removed to Monte Cassino. Unless Romuald himself boasted of his exploit, it is not at all clear by what route the story reached the Ravenna area. It seems likely, therefore, that whatever may have been the original form of the story, it was local. Even as it stands, it would serve equally well for Romuald's departure from **any** hermitage.

The second section, making the comparison to David, is straightforwardly editorial.

The third, describing the manner of the journey, shows no necessary connection with either of the main stories of the chapter. Although it may well be true to life, it probably reflects the saint's customary appearance rather than any particular story.

The final story, concerning Sergius's repentance, belongs with the information of the next chapter. Although this was perhaps remembered more to the glory of San Severo itself than to Romuald's, there is no reason to doubt that Sergius was told of for years in the monastery, especially considering the marvellous death he is about to die in the next chapter.

Literal historicity

It has been suggested above that Damian did not have any real knowledge as to why Romuald travelled to Cuxa or of what he did there. The story of Sergius's death provides him with a reason for the saint's return to Italy to cover what is perhaps the end of this same

lacuna. It seems questionable, therefore, whether Romuald travelled directly to Sergius from Cuxa. When his next hermitage site is named in chapter 16, it is back on the Classe estates. In chapter 22 he will be abbot there. This would perhaps suggest that Damian has exaggerated the breach with Sant 'Apollinare and that when Romuald had done whatever he went to Cuxa for, he simply returned to his home community.

NOTES

1. VR p.35n.1
2. 1st **Corinthians** 1:25 & 1:21 respectively. **Sermo** 66, PL144, 884BD.
3. In Op.11, **Liber qui dicitur Dominus vobiscum**, c.19, PL145, 249A. Damian develops the image of the hermit's cell as a holy sepulchre in which sinners can be resurrected by the Holy Spirit, an important point in his understanding of the eremitical function.
4. Cf. c.64 section (i), and c.25 section (v), where a journey on bare feet is undertaken as an act of penance; ascetics lived in permanent penance.
5. Cf. **Sermo** 43, PL144, 734B.
6. **Psalm** 22:4
7. **Matthew** 3:2 in both cases.
8. **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1009CD.
9. Cf. **Leviticus** 14:18, **Numbers** 6:9 & 18, **Job** 1:20, **Judges** 16:17, **Isaiah** 7:20, **Ezekiel** 5:1 & 27:31, and **Acts** 18:18 & 21:24.
10. **1st Kings** 22:13-14.
11. **Isaiah** 7:15 & 22.
12. Salus; connotations of salvation.

CHAPTER 14 SERGIUS SEES THE HOLY SPIRIT AND DIES BEATIFICALLY

This chapter may be divided into three: (i) the first sentence, a topic sentence; (ii) the second to seventh sentences (to p.36 l.22), telling the story of the chapter; (iii) the remaining three sentences, drawing Old Testament comparisons.

Damian's argument

The first sentence is a generalising summary:

(i) Sergius puts right his ways.

> Sergius, therefore, having at last accepted counsel from a sane mind, corrected, by walking aright in the holy conversation, all that he had previously in so many ways done wrong because of [his] retrograde will.

(ii) He sees the vision and dies.

> He had, to be brief, among [his] other [practices], the custom of frequently attending before a particular image of the Saviour and of there praying with especially abundant tears and smiting himself with great contrition in [his] heart.[1] And so one day, as he persisted there attentively in prayer (a novel and unheard-of thing in our times), the Holy Spirit suddenly appeared to him - in what likeness I do not know. [When] Sergius asked [Him] at once Who He might be, He clearly declared that He was the Holy Spirit, and suddenly, as though passing away from the eyes [that] beheld Him, He was gone. Instantly [Sergius] was rapt into ecstasy. Ignited with the fire of Him Whom he had seen, he began to run quickly after Him into the cloister of the monastery and, with a great rush of fervour, to ask the brethren who were present there where the Holy Spirit had gone. And [as] they thought he had fallen into insanity and rebuked him harshly, Sergius asserted that he had without any doubt seen the Holy Spirit and that He had visibly passed away before his gaze. He was instantly taken ill, lay down in bed and within a few days finished his life - a favoured consummation.

This story is built upon the same contrast of infirmity and strength as the previous chapter. Reformed by "**sane mentis ... consilio**",

Sergius is now in his turn taken for insane by those who do not understand.

The new point of the chapter is that it is now the brethren of San Severo who are the uncomprehending abusers of the beatified. Although they are neither evil nor foolish to the same degree as the rustics of the previous chapter, they clearly share in the same folly. Sergius's deadly life-giving vision is as mad to them as is the vivifying sepulture of Romuald's Christlike infirmity in the eyes of the worldly-wise. The **virtus** that saves Sergius is brought into the **coenobium** from outside, not through the agency of the uncomprehending brethren found in the cloister, that symbol of the **coenobium** as worldly market-place employed by Damian in later works. The discipline that Romuald teaches his father to apply to his body while in prayer before the image of Christ, Himself both the model and the source of this true strength in corporeal vulnerability, is evidently unknown to these monks. Out of it come all the rewards of contemplation: compunction (evidenced by the tears), the **visio Dei** - that supreme contemplative joy and foretaste of eternal life - and, in the next sentences, the final reward of that eternal life itself. Thus is this salvation in the **coenobium** mediated through the desert.

(iii) It is as with Moses and Daniel.

> This undoubtedly proved what was said by the divine voice to Moses, "There shall no man see me, and live". [And] as Daniel added when he said that he had seen not God but a vision of God, "I fainted and was sick for many days." Rightly, therefore, did Sergius merit after this to see eternal life, which is God, and at once passed away from temporal life.

Damian's sources

The first and last sections here are plainly editorial. The account of the vision and holy death has both the form and function of an orally transmissible story and was probably told at San Severo, and possibly elsewhere around monastic Ravenna, in memory of a notable conversion. Taken on its own, it shows no necessary connection with the story of Romuald's visit, and it is therefore likely that the half-sentence in which the brethren interpret the vision claim as madness, which serves both to pick up the theme of the previous chapter and implicitly to attribute the sanctification exclusively to that visitor and not at all to the community in which Sergius lives and dies, is the redactor's own contribution.

Literal historicity

There is no reason to disbelieve that Sergius made a good end at San Severo.[2] Even as Damian tells the story, however, there is a delay between Romuald's visit and the death, so he was apparently not present at the time and there is no reason to suppose that he was necessarily even in Ravenna.

NOTES

1. Cor. This is an accelerated form of penitence. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 44-45, points out that three thousand blows were equal to one year of penitence at Fonte Avellana. Blum, **Peter Damian**, pp. 104-5 associates Damian's promotion of the practice with the influence of Romuald on the grounds that Damian's rigorism was derived from him. Blum later points out, however (p.114 n.27), that self-flagellation had been practised in monasteries established by Caesarius and Aurelian of Arles.
2. Whether he actually saw the vision is past determination. Tabacco, VR p.36 n.1, notes the Ravennese hagiographical tradition on this. Cf. also **Matthew** 5:8; "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

CHAPTER 15 THE SANCTIFICATION OF JOHN GRADENIGO

The chapter can be divided into four sections of varying historical status: (i) the first sentence, completing the story of Count Oliba's conversion and the beginning of his journey from Cuxa with Gradenigo, Guarin and Marinus; (ii) the second sentence, relating Marinus's end; (iii) the third to tenth sentences (p.37 l.14 to p.38 l.20), describing a breach of faith by Gradenigo, and his correction; (iv) the remainder of the chapter, in which Gradenigo's final sanctity is extolled.

Damian's argument

(i) Oliba is accompanied from Cuxa.

> Now Count Oliba left his property to his son, with a great abundance of riches - in fact fifteen packhorses laden with treasure - [and] directed his own course to the monastery of the blessed Benedict, accompanied by Guarin and John, and also by Marinus. Bidding farewell to those who had come with him, [who had] not until then suspected any such thing of him [and were] prostrating themselves with the multiplicity [of their] groans and the bitterness [of their] tears, he constrained them to return home.

Thus Damian introduces the chapter by completing his account of the conversion of Oliba. So little is added to the story that at first sight it is difficult to understand why Damian did not contrive to maximise the coherence of his narrative and include these details with the rest of the Oliba story in chapters 11 and 12. The reason for this seems to be that he was then concerned with the issue of Romuald's word of **magisterium**, his special eremitical **virtus** for Christian counsel deriving from his ascetic advances in the Cuxa hermitage; the important point was that Romuald was free to speak saving words that bishops and abbots could not utter. Damian has now moved on to the succeeding issue of salvation in obedience to the

master's discipline. So Oliba, having previously taken counsel with the saint without record of results, now returns to the story to accept and obey it.

The worldly bishops and abbots of his retinue now prove their inadequacy as spiritual masters beyond doubt. Having been unaware of the detail of the counsel offered in spite of their authentication of its general import, they are stricken by their prince's conversion to grieving in the same manner in which Sergius has lamented his sins in the previous chapter.

(ii) Marinus killed by Saracens.

> After a little, Marinus departed for Apulia. Dwelling there in solitude, he was presently killed by Saracen brigands.

The brevity and stark simplicity of this death notice for Marinus possibly conceal a certain embarrassment on Damian's part. It might have been expected that the great saint's first master in the eremitical life would receive at least a short euology. The reason why he does not is probably the anomalous status which coloured also the account of his **magisterium** in chapter 4. Lacking an initial coenobitic phase, the course of Marinus's life has not been totally proper, and it could not be proper to accord him a blessed end equal to that of Romuald's fully regular disciples. Damian therefore records his death, suggestive as it is of martyrdom - and indeed interpreted later, as Tabacco notes, in terms of martyrdom - without himself drawing out this implication.

(iii) Gradenigo strays and returns.

Shortly after [this], Guarin, [who was] accustomed to rushing about[2] for prayer's sake[1] and John, who had been incited to this same religious observance by [this] brother's example, came to a common decision to travel to Jerusalem. [When he] learnt of this, Oliba, sad and weeping, began to beg them with the greatest of devotion not to break the oath[3] [and] desert him, but rather to protect him in God's service as the blessed Romuald had directed. And he added: "You at least, John, [should] remember that your master committed me the more pressingly on **your** oath, and threatened you with the designation of disobedience if you should depart." [The two], however, persisted in their design, obstinate in their intent, [and] in the end Oliba **was** left [and] they embarked upon their pilgrim journey. And when [they had] come down from the mountain [and] strayed onto the plain, they made a place for themselves [and] began to manhandle between them something [or another] of [their] requisites. And while [they were] doing [this], suddenly Guarin's horse turned, against the will of [its] rider, in an impulsive frenzy to face another direction. [Its] iron shoe struck John's shin [and] broke it. [As] he [was] prostrated at once on the earth by the greatness of the pain, [his] memory recalled to [his] mind in that late moment [his] master's commandments, and he accused himself, in words of public confession, [of being] faithless [and] guilty of disobedience. And so he learnt from a broken leg that it was a sin to break an oath. And because he himself [who] was capable of reason had been disobedient to [his] master, the irrational animal knew not how to obey [its] rider, to the protection of [John's] own safety.[4]

This story, in the form of an obedience story, has been included to associate Gradenigo's final sanctity as convincingly as possible with Romuald. Gradenigo's progress from Romuald to Benedict, even when it is to a hermitage outside Benedict's **coenobium**, amounts to a small difficulty in Damian's argument, for it means that Gradenigo had become a member of the Monte Cassino community, from which it could be thought that he derived his final **virtus** from that community and from its saint. To convince his readers that Gradenigo's sanctity derives in fact from direct obedience to the commandments of his previous master, Damian introduces this otherwise superfluous story (for if Gradenigo had not learnt from Romuald's own mouth at Cuxa that disobedience is a sin, he had not learnt **anything** in the religious life) in which Gradenigo proceeds from a dramatic correction of disobedience to Romuald to constant obedience thereafter; hence, his

later sanctity is achieved in such obedience.

Other indications are also present that this is Damian's purpose. Gradenigo, most importantly, does not go astray independently but in explicit collusion with Guarin, who knew of his obligation to his master. Oliba's plea to this pair, ostensibly aimed principally at Gradenigo and serving partly to justify Guarin (whom Romuald had no obvious right to bind to any duty), serves also to remind the reader of this knowledge; Guarin **wilfully** leads Gradenigo astray. And for this purpose simply as a brother; Gradenigo is brought low **"exemplo fratris"**. Guarin's status as an abbot, which might be thought to give him a much more obviously legimitate authority over religious than the unofficial master Romuald yet has, is not here recalled, but simply the fact that he is a religious not subordinate to Romuald. Now the non-Romualdine religious tempts Gradenigo onto an unholy pilgrimage to Jerusalem, that great anagogical symbol of the Christian journey to Heaven itself. It is unholy because it is other than the route prescribed by the master and therefore represents a deviation into disobedience, but beyond this even Guarin's own travelling on pilgrimage is not favourably characterised. In chapter 5, when he came to the rescue of Peter Orseolo, Damian described Guarin as **"orationis gratia ... peregrinari solitus"**. Now he is merely **"orationis causa discurrere solitus"**. He has descended to an inferior kind of travel, and the overtone of travelling under grace has been removed. The implication of this is that Romualdine eremitism is supreme over all other **religionis officia**, over all other routes to Heaven; and even that the obedient follower of Romuald is superior in that great Benedictine virtue, stability, than the known coenobite. Just as Oliba has been converted to coenobitism in spite of abbots and Sergius has been saved at San Severo when the brethren were at a loss,

Romuald's **virtus** is now to save Gradenigo for a sanctification at Monte Cassino which the incomprehension of a lesser brother would obviate.

(iv) The sanctification of John Gradenigo.

> Thereupon returning to the place he had set out to leave, he entreated that a cell be built for him by the monastery, and there he persisted in the holy conversation for as long as he lived, about thirty years. He [had] great charity, wondrous humility, abstinence both very strict and circumspect, such that no one even within the cloister of the monastery knew how the sainted man fasted. And among the other virtues given [to him], he had so great a hatred for the vice of detraction that, immediately anyone opened [his] mouth for [that purpose], the arrow [would] rebound as though from hard stone [and] return at once [and strike him who had] aimed [it]. After his passing many miracles were divinely worked through him.

Thus the perfection of sanctity is achieved under Romuald's discipline.

Damian's sources

The four sections into which this chapter has been divided appear to vary considerably in historical status.

The second and fourth, relating the ends of Marinus and Gradenigo, are straightforward records of holy men and are to be taken literally. Bruno of Querfurt records some similar details about Gradenigo but with sufficient variation from Damian's account to suggest that the latter's source was probably independent. Monte Cassino itself is to be presumed to have disseminated information about him through the large number of monks coming and going from that house. There is no evidence, internal or external, as to how or in what context the intelligence of Marinus's death reached Damian.

The first and third sections are almost certainly not authentic. The account of Oliba's final departure from Cuxa is superficially plausible but on closer inspection unconvincing. Damian is still able to offer no information about Oliba except his name. The name of the son whom he leaves in his place, the name of the lands over which he presides, the identities of the bishops and abbots in his retinue, and all other details about him remain unspecified; they are all symbols of his spiritual status. The new information, concerning the fifteen horses laden with mobile wealth to be returned to his son is almost certainly included for the same purpose. Oliba is the image of the great man of the world, travelling his territory with retinue and glory. This he leaves to travel in simplicity and subjection to his conversion; how great a conversion it is. Damian still needs no more information than that suggested in relation to chapter 11: that Count Oliba was recalled in northern Italy as having travelled south **"sub pretextu orationis"** with Guarin. The rest can be deduced.

It is particularly striking in the third section, concerning Gradenigo's disobedience, that Oliba unobtrusively slips from the story. Damian omits to mention his end, whether he finally perfected his conversion or not. It is true that Oliba's conversion has already fulfilled its function in relation to Romuald himself and that his principal function in the present context is to provide an issue over which Gradenigo may be disobedient, but the incompletion of the story suggests nonetheless that Damian really did not know whether Oliba effected his conversion at Monte Cassino and was not prepared to say that he did. He travelled **"sub praetextu orationis"**; that he did know.

As for the rest of this disobedience story, it is modelled principally

on the story of Balaam's ass, **Numbers** 22. There are, however, certain differences. The most important in the present context is that Gradenigo follows Guarin **"de monte ... in campestria"**. This image, although found elsewhere in Bible stories and clearly implying a spiritual descent, is not from the Balaam story, is sudden and unprepared-for on the literal level of the present story, and indeed reads very strangely in its context; it seems to suggest that Guarin and Gradenigo were travelling to Monte Cassino by way of mountaintops. At the beginning of the fourth section, moreover, Gradenigo, **"illuc unde venise ceperat rediens, cellam sibi edificari prope monasterium petiit"**. The end of his journey to Monte Cassino is not described; it almost seems as though Monte Cassino is itself the mountain from which he has strayed onto the plain. This may indicate that Damian has drawn here not only on the story of Balaam's ass, but also on an oral tradition concerning an unauthorised departure by Gradenigo from Monte Cassino. Quite what this story would have been it is not possible to be certain, but the story appears to have not only the obedience lesson so directly useful to Damian, but also, as noted obliquely above, a **stability** function. It could most certainly support an argument that Gradenigo was granted sanctity for thirty years of stable obedience at Monte Cassino whereas he was **punished** for his unauthorised attempt at pilgrimage; a satisfactorily Benedictine lesson. There would be no need for Guarin to be involved in such a story.[5] In this case, Damian's version is a redaction for his own, slightly different purpose, conflated with what he knew of the pilgrimage of Guarin and Oliba.

This suggests in its turn that the chapter as a whole (together with the preparatory points for it in chapters 11 and 12) is constructed upon a series of conflations of small pieces of information of varying

origins: Romuald's presence before Sergius's death, occurring and recalled at San Severo; the pilgrimage southward through northern Italy of Romuald's Cuxa neighbours Guarin and Oliba, recalled at houses through which they had passed; the death of Marinus, also in the south of Italy; and certain memories of John Gradenigo at Monte Cassino. Both the argument and the narrative are very neatly rounded off to this point, after which Romuald's life takes on a new direction, by this means.

Literal historicity

It is known from other sources that Guarin went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and that John Gradenigo lived eremitically by Monte Cassino. John's particular antipathy to monastic backbiting appears to have no particular place in Damian's development argument and is probably an authentic reminiscence.[6] There is nothing in the chapter, however, to be learnt about Romuald and no more than the vaguest information about anyone else.

NOTES

1. Orationis causa.
2. Discurrere.
3. Cf. C.12 section (iv).
4. For Damian to explain his use of a symbol is comparatively rare in the **Life.** He does so possibly because the unruly horse frequently represents the unruly passions of the body. Cf. Blum, **Peter Damian**, p.186, and Op.25, **De dignitate sacerdotii**, PL145, 496A; also c.62 below.
5. Bruno, Vfr. c.2 p.717, seems to indicate that Guarin was already dead before Gradenigo went to Monte Cassino.
6. Bruno, Vfr. c.2 p.718 also records Gradenigo's special reputation for opposing detraction.

CHAPTER 16 VICTORIOUS ROMUALD IS MARKED BY A DEMONIC BATTLE-SCAR

This chapter divides historiographically into three: (i) the first two sentences (to p.40 l.1), based in oral reminiscence of Romuald, living by Sant 'Apollinare; (ii) the remainder of the chapter except for the last sentence (to p.40 l.18), based in written-traditional demonology; (iii) the last sentence, a possible oral record of the scar.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald retires to Petersbridge and St. Martin's-in-the-Wood.

> Now after his father's chastisement, Romuald fixed himself a small cell in the marsh of Classe [and] dwelt there in the place that is called Petersbridge. But shortly thereafter, not [because] he feared any ailment of the body, not [because] he recoiled in nausea from the stench, but lest because of some weakness he should allow himself any remission from [his] rigorous abstinence, he removed to another Classe estate, where there is the church of the blessed Martin that is called "in-the-Wood".

The five chapters beginning with this one are constructed principally around the theme of metaphorical mortification, anticipated briefly in chapter 13 before Romuald's projection of Sergius into Heaven. The scene is set in these two sentences, where two images of hermitages are brought together to characterise it. The marsh or swamp habitation is representative of a living death and of the danger of actual death; partly because of its natural nastiness and real unhealthiness, partly through the traditional symbolic association of stench with things demonic. Romuald will achieve a fuller mortification of this kind in chapter 20. For the present, the significance of such a habitation is combined with that of a setting more typical of the hermitages associated with Romuald[1] and

reminiscent of the wood imagery of chapter 1. This latter habitation will also turn out later in the chapter to have been a graveyard, the additional significance of which will be noted below. At the same time, the self-mortifying nature of Romuald's rigorous asceticism is further suggested by such associations.

(ii) The demons return.

> Now there, on a certain day, as he chanted Compline, there suddenly fell upon him, because there had been in that place an ancient cemetery, a cogitation, as often happens, on a matter of that kind. At once the great horror of a phantasmal illusion invaded his heart.[2] And as this was turning over and over so many times in his mind, lo, malign spirits came into his cell in a sudden rush [and] threw him forthwith upon the earth. They overwhelmed him with a tremendous beating, striking down the hardest of blows on members exhausted by long fasting. At length, in the midst of these scourging blows, Romuald [was] visited with a dispensation of divine grace [and] broke out with this cry: "Dear Jesus, beloved Jesus, why have you forsaken me? Surely you have not delivered me altogether into the hands of [my] enemies?" At this, all the evil spirits were put to flight by divine force.[3] And immediately such great compunction of divine love lit Romuald's breast that his whole heart[4] melted into tears as if [it were] wax, and he felt nothing from [those] so many wounds of [his] stricken body. At once he arose healthy and strong from the earth and, although hampered still by blood, returned to that verse of the psalm that he had left.

The demonology here, drawn primarily from St. Athanasius's **Life of St. Antony**, takes up and advances further the argument of chapter 7. Damian adds a number of Scriptural reminiscences not found in the Athanasian model, through which his personal understanding of the issues involved is expressed.

Central among these, although not phraseologically echoed, is 1st **Peter** 5:8-9, the standard introductory text of Compline: "**Sobrii estote, et vigilate: quia adversarius vester diabolus tanquam leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret**[5]**: cue resistite fortes in fide**".

The verse immediately following this is, "**Deus autem omnis gratiae, qui vocavit nos in aeternum suam gloriam in Christo Iesu, modicum passos ipse perficiet, confirmabit, solidabitque.** Compline is thus already associated with trial, passion and succour.

Echoes of two psalms closely associated respectively with the temptation of Christ **in deserto** and His Crucifixion are more clearly discernible. **Psalm** 90 (or 91), reflected in the **Matthew** and **Luke** temptation stories[6] and one of the three psalms specified by St. Benedict for daily use at Compline,[7] is the source of much of the imagery of this chapter:

> **Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi, in protectione Dei caeli commorabitur ... non timebis a timore nocturno ... a negotio perambulante in tenebris, ab incursu ... Non accedet ad te malum: et flagellum non appropinquabit tabernaculo tuo ... Quoniam in me speravit, libero eum: protegam eum, quoniam cognovit nomen meum. Clamabit ad me, et ego exaudiam eum: cum ipso sum in tribulatione: eripiam eum, et glorificabo eum ...**

Psalm 21 (or 22) is the source of the focal exclamation, "**Deus, Deus meus, respice in me**" (echoed in the **Matthew** and **Luke** Crucifixion accounts at the moment of Christ's death[8]), and also of the verse, "**Factum est cor meum tanquam cera liquescens.**"[9] The combination of these images, with such significations, argues implicitly that this temptation of the saint is after the order of the temptation and passion of Christ. This is reflected further in the scourging and the blood.

Other connections make the argument more pointed. Near the beginning of the chapter is an echo of **Genesis** 15:12: "**Cumque sol occumberet, sopor irruit super Abram, et** horror magnus **et tenebrosus** invasit **eum**"; an echo appropriate enough to the hour of Compline. Damian comments on this passage elsewhere: "**Solis occubitis mundi designat casum**";

and again; "**Et hoc circa finem diei, hoc est, circa terminum mundi.**"[10] If this taken with the graveyard setting of the present chapter and Damian's statement that it was **ex huiusmodi** [i.e. concerning the cemetery] **re cogitatio** that was the occasion of the demonic attack, it appears that what Romuald is actually suffering here is a passion of fear and doubt, a frenzy of **cogitatio** that temporarily overthrows the tranquil serenity of contemplative worship, over the matter of death. In chapter 7, the demons have tempted him to doubt the eremitical **conversatio** and he has overcome these doubts with the armour of faith. Now his defence against the overwhelming horror of the spectre of death is to invoke Christ in almost the same words as those in which the dying Christ had cried to God the Father, and thus to associate himself in Christ's victory.[11]

(iii) A scar remains on his brow in evidence.

> [And] indeed, because at the entry of the demons the little cell's window had dashed against his brow, a clear scar later hardened there, [and] this obvious evidence of the wound showed as long as the sainted man lived.

These results are also significant. He rises "**sanus et validus de terra**" as though in a kind of resurrection, and in the scar carries thereafter a corporeal mark of his martyrdom **in voto** as his Master before Him carried marks of His own passion. From his sepulture in the hermitage he will now move out to bring salvation on a wide variety of human categories. The special nature of his mission, however, is suggested already in the placement of the scar upon the brow: Ezekiel's forehead was hardened at the time of his calling to carry the words of God to the rebellious and unhearkening house of Israel[12]; Romuald's Israelites will be, from chapter 18, the monks of his region.

Damian's sources

The first section of this chapter, recording the sites of Romuald's two hermitages by Sant 'Apollinare, is clearly based in oral reminiscence, presumably at that monastery itself, although the reason for Romuald's move from one to the other might have been supplied by Damian. His presence by Sant 'Apollinare may be connected with chapter 19, which will be considered further there. The scar is a traditional mark of warriors against demons, but as Damian would be hard-pressed to deduce honestly that Romuald had one on his forehead, he has probably heard tell of this too. The main part of the chapter, however, is so thoroughly assimilated to written sources that it is not at all likely to have come to Damian in its present form, even if a story imputing responsibility for the scar to the demons already circulated.

In addition to the Biblical sources cited above, the chapter is derived from a long tradition of demonology, most particularly St. Athanasius's **Life of St. Antony**, chapters 8-10. In these chapters, Antony, living in tombs isolated from the nearest village, is lashed mercilessly by demons in the night-time until almost dead with pain, and is restored to tranquillity and painlessness by the opening of the roof and a beam of light which enters thereby. This is clearly as important in Damian's imagery as the Biblical sources, but it is notable that he does not follow it to the same conclusion:

> **Illico praesentiam Domini intellexit Antonius, et ex intimo pectore trahens longa suspiria, ad lumen quod ei apparuerat loquebatur, dicens: Ubi eras, bone Iesu? ubi eras? Quare non a principio affuisti, ut sanares vulnera mea? Et vox ad eum facta est, dicens: Antoni, hic eram, sed expectabam videre certamen tuum. Nunc autem, quia dimicando viriliter non cessisti, semper auxiliabor tibi, et faciam te in omni orbe nominari.**[13]

The demons have already been worsted before Antony speaks to Jesus, and they have not succeeded in upsetting the equanimity of his mind: "**imperterritus durabat mente pervigili. Et licet gemitum vulnera carnis exprimerent, sensu tamen idem permanens ...**"[14] At length, "**Multa contra sanctum Antonium minanetes, fremebant dentibus suis, quod nullus eorum tentamenta consequeretur effectus, sed maxime e contrario gigneretur illusio**".[15] The implications of this are sufficiently different from those of Damian's story to indicate that he has not relied for **argument** on the fourth-century exemplar, however much he may have been inspired by its imagery.

Literal historicity

If tradition at Sant 'Apollinare recalled that Romuald had been secluded in the two particular places named, then it is probable that he was. He may well have borne a scar. That he would have announced any victory over demons occurring in private there does not seem likely; in which case he is again simply a model.

NOTES

1. Cf. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, pp. 85-86.
2. Animus.
3. Virtus.
4. Cor.
5. In a letter to the great Hildebrand himself, Damian used this same text in support of an explicit argument which throws further light on the implicit argument of this chapter and the next: "Veniunt [the children of Israel] in Thare [**Num.** 33:27], quod Graece quidem exstasis interpretatur, in nostra vero lingua dicitur contemplatio. Consequens est enim ut quisquis antea probatur per patientiam, proinde ad contemplationis perveniat gratiam; et qui prius in tribulatione deprimitur, postmodum ad visionis intimae laetitiam sustollatur. Sin autem Thare, sicut quidam putant, astutia vel malitia debet intelligis hoc ad Ecclesiarum praepositos non immerito videtur posse referri; ut ipsi suis auditoribus timeant, qui in tentationum tribulatione laborant, Astutia enim et malitia illius cavenda est de quo dicitus: 'Quoniam adversarius noster tanguum leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret.' Deinde procedunt in Methca, vel, sicut alibi legitur, Maathica, quod interpretatur mors

nova. Nunquam tam perfecte diabolica cavetur astutia, quam si Christo commorimur, ut tanquam insensibiles ad hostis callidi tentamenta redeamus." **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1059CD. "Callida argumenta" and "malitia" will appear together at the end of the next chapter.

6. **Matthew** 4:6 and **Luke** 4:10, reflecting **Psalm** 90:11-12.
7. **Ben. Reg.** c.18.
8. **Psalm** 21(22):2, **Matthew** 27:46, **Mark** 15:34.
9. **Psalm** 21(22):15.
10. **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1002AB.
11. Cf. **Expositio visionum sanctorum martyrum Mariani et Iacobi**, PL144, 1033CD, where it is at the moment before fulfilment that the vision of Christ is lost; there compared more explicitly with Christ's own cry. This disappearance of the vision immediately before fulfilment is clearly reflected in the story of Sergius's vision of the Holy Spirit in c.14 above. That story, **Psalm** 21 and **Psalm** 4 (another special Compline psalm) all develop the issue of hope, the well-spring of Romuald's cry. For that cry of desolation at the climax of passion is a shorthand means of recalling the contrast between the apparent desolation of the psalmist in **Psalm** 21 and the rewarded hope of his fathers that he comes to recognise as his guarantee. Romuald has been unable to cope with his **cogitatio** on this point. His salvation is in the total abandonment of all supports but the grace of hope.
12. **Ezekiel** 2-3, especially 3:8.
13. **Vita Antonii**, c.9, PL73, 132D.
14. C.8, PL73, 132B.
15. C.8, PL73, 132C.

CHAPTER 17 THE DEVIL TURNS TO HIS DISCIPLES

Three divisions may be identified here: (i) the first sentence, a generalising summary; (ii) the rest of the chapter except for the last sentence, in which Romuald taunts the demons; (iii) the last sentence, in which Romuald's **aliene salutis cura** is impugned.

Damian's argument

(i) The devil can no longer frighten Romuald.

> And so the soldier of Christ, toughened by [his] war experience, now applied himself to growing daily from strength to strength[1], and always stronger than himself, he was now able to fear nothing [from] the wiles of the feeble enemy.

(ii) He taunts them.

> For often, [as] he was living[2] in [his] cell, evil spirits, like the foulest of ravens or like vultures, would appear, taking places nearby as if they had come to guard an animal's carcass that they did not dare to approach [and] were driven to watch from a distance. Often they would show themselves in the form of Ethiopians, often in the semblance of various animals. The illustrious [man] of Christ, the triumphant, would taunt them, saying: "See, I am ready. Come [here] and show what strength[3] there is in you. Surely you aren't now growing weak at all? Surely you aren't already beaten and have no more schemes for fighting against God's little servant?" With these words in short, and [with others] of the same kind, he [reduced] the evil spirits to confusion [and] drove them straight off as though he had let fly so many javelins.

This chapter exists primarily as a link passage between the previous chapter and the next one. The present section is developed from the same sources as chapter 16 and takes the argument a little further. The image of the fowls and the cadaver is adapted from **Genesis** 15:11, the verse preceding that from which the **horror magnus** has been taken for the previous chapter. Damian later commented on this verse in connection with disrupted religious activity:

> **Maligni spiritus, vel orationes nostras pravis cogitationibus polluere, vel opera bona peccati cuiuslibet attaminatione corrumpere nituntur. Unde scriptum est quia, 'eum Abraham Deo sacrificium de pecoribus et volucribus devotus offeret, descenderunt volucres super cadavera, et abigebat eos Abraham.' Quid enim exprimunt volucres, nisi reprobos spiritus per aerea volitantes? Volucres ergo a sacrificio nostro repellimus, cum orationem, seu operum nostrorum victimas, a malignis spiritibus eos foedare tentantibus, provide custodimus.**[4]

Romuald now does this, using insults which, as in chapter 7, are indirectly theological statements of the true status of the demons.

(iii) The devil makes agents of Romuald's disciples.

> When the devil saw, therefore, that he could not prevail against God's attendant[5] in himself, he converted to cunning tricks, and wherever the sainted man went, he aroused the hearts[6] of his disciples to malice against him. For whereas it had been impossible for Romuald to be withheld by the attack of his own agitated fervour[7], at least [the devil] might hold him back from care for others' salvation[8], and whereas it was not in the least possible that he could himself be overcome by the enemy, he might at any rate not deny victory as for others.

This is the crux of the chapter, preparing for the important chapter 18, in relation to which it will be considered further below.

Damian's sources

The first and third sections of this chapter are simply editorial.

In the second section, the appearance of the demons in the form of wild animals and Romuald's words in reaction to this are, as Tabacco points out, reminiscent of the same section of the **Life of St. Antony** as is the previous chapter.[9] The similarity, however, is only general and Damian's account represents a summary or distillation of a broad tradition of demonology rather than a direct imitation of Athanasius's passage. It has been argued above that Damian has also employed an allegory from **Genesis** 15. These written antecedents are sufficient to

account for the entire section and there is no evidence of any oral source.

Literal historicity

In such a chapter as this, Romuald is entirely a model religious. Although it is more than probable that he was tormented by spiritual struggles, what is recorded here is not the story of an individual.

NOTES

1. De viribus in vires.
2. Residens; can mean "encamped", in the military sense.
3. Virtus.
4. **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1,001D - 1,002A.
5. Famulus. At Fonte Avellana in Damian's time, the community was divided into monks and embryonic lay brothers. As "famulus" was one of the terms for these latter, famulus Dei is to be considered about the holiest status under Heaven. cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.44.
6. Animi; in the plural this can mean simply "anger" or "animosity" (O.L.D.), but to translate thus would be to lose all the rich connotations of this important term.
7. Accensus fervor.
8. Aliene salutis cura; at once health and salvation.
9. VR p.41 nn. 2 & 3. **Vita Antonii** cc. 8 & 9.

CHAPTER 18 THE BRETHREN OF BAGNO TAKE DIABOLICAL LIBERTIES

This important chapter divides historiographically into five sections of varying origins: (i) the first sentence, in which Romuald constructs the monastery of Bagno; (ii) the second and third sentences (to p.43 l.1), in which he accepts a gift of money; (iii) the fourth and fifth (to p.43 l.8), in which he is expelled by the brethren for retaining control of it himself; (iv) the sixth and seventh (to p.44 l.4), in which he is tempted to the sin of singularity; (v) the remainder of the chapter, in which the brethren rejoice in their sin and are punished.

Damian's argument

The first two sections set the scene:

(i) Romuald constructs the monastery of Bagno.

> For at a certain time he crossed to the place that is called Bagno, which is situated in the territory of Sarsina. Remaining there for a considerable time, he constructed a monastery in honour of the blessed archangel Michael and entered a cell not far from it, in which he intended to dwell.

(ii) He keeps the Marquess Hugh's donation.

> To him there the Marquess Hugh sent, for his needs, seven pounds of his own money. These Romuald accepted so that, being rightly prodigal, he might distribute them compassionately. And so, when he heard that the monastery of Palazzolo had been destroyed by fire, he assigned sixty shillings of the aforesaid money for the relief of the brethren and reserved the remainder for expenditure on similar work.

(iii) He is expelled by the brethren.

> On learning this, the monks of St. Michael were incited to a brutish frenzy against him, partly because he had already stood out against their crooked practices in many ways, partly because

> he was not spending all of the sums conferred upon him on themselves, but some on others. A conspiracy, therefore, was hatched, and they [all] burst as if of one accord into his cell with stakes and poles, worked him over with a great beating, tore everything apart and disgracefully expelled him in dishonour from their bounds.

Thus the unruly brethren become tools of the demons and it becomes Romuald's passion to suffer at their hands. This is the beginning of a central theme of the remainder of the **Life.** In community after community, Romuald will suffer abuse or rejection, in varying degrees.

As in the anticipatory case of Sant 'Apollinare in chapter 3, it is questionable how far Damian really intends to portray monks as wicked; not all the communities can have been so very evil. In the next section of this chapter it is clear that Damian's concern is to make a point about Romuald's function among religious rather than to condemn a particular community. For the present, he is cast in the (not un-Christlike) role of the innocent persecuted for his troubles.

(iv) He is tempted to the sin of singularity.

> And as he left, expelled in this way, and a mighty sadness sank deep into his mind, he considered this to himself, that now, in future, he would content himself with his own salvation and set the care[1] for others' aside altogether. [But] a great terror invaded his heart upon this cogitation, that if he should obstinately persist in this that he had conceived in [his] mind, he need have no doubt that he would perish, rendering himself damnable in divine judgment.

These sentences, echoing the wording of chapter 16, express a little more of Damian's theory of Romuald's function. Where **cogitatio** upon death has been the devil's inroad and the cause of invading terror, now it is spiritual self-centredness that carries the threat of damnation. It is the model hermit's passion to have - after a kind - a cure of souls; an **aliene salutis cura** is Damian's phrase.[2] This

theme is not as fully developed here as in other of Damian works[3], but the remainder of the **Life** assumes it and it was to become a constant problem in the hagiographer's own life.[4] It will be followed up from another angle in chapters 22 and 23.

(v) The rejoicing sinners are punished.

> The monks, however, possessed of [their] long-desired revenge, [at last] accomplished, and lightened, as it were, by the casting off of a heavy burden, acclaimed among themselves with great applause what they had done to the attendant of God, and released themselves with a wanton joy into immoderate sport and merriment. And then, to make a kind of humorous ritual out of such great rejoicing, they prepared for themselves a sumptuous spread of delicacies. It happened then to be winter, which befitted not only the time of year but also, most aptly, the chillness of their minds. Now one of them, who had been very cruel to Christ's most blessed soldier, made it his business to fetch honey from which he might make honey-wine for the banquet. And when in this endeavour he was crossing the River Savio, his feet suddenly stumbled on the planks of the bridge and he was thrown off it. Swallowed up in the river's depths, he was dragged to the very bottom and destroyed. Clearly it was by the righteous judgment of God that the turbulent water glutted this man to death, who, where he ought to have wept, had been greedy[5] for the sweetness of honey, pursuing pleasure[6] in life. And in the night, when all were at [their] usual rest[7], there fell a very great quantity of snow, and suddenly the whole fabric of the communal edifice collapsed upon them. The head of one, the arms of a second, another's legs, or some other parts, were crushed. And from one of them an eye was plucked out, and rightly did he bear the division of [his] bodily light, who, divided against his neighbour, had lost one - even though he retained the other - of the lights of twofold charity.

The key to this highly suggestive passage is the striking final sentence. The lights of twofold charity refer - as Tabacco's note suggests[8] - to the love of God and of the neighbour. The punished monk, in division against his neighbour, has lost one of these; presumably he has retained the love of God. This is a direct counter to the common assumption that it is the hermit who withdraws in love of God to the neglect of his neighbour while the **coenobium** is the preserve of the "social virtues." As in chapter 3, where the brethren of Sant 'Apollinare have been saved from the **baratrum iniquitatis** of

their collective sin by Romuald's withdrawal into the individual prayer of the closet of his heart, the **coenobium** is a place of conspiracy and infectious sin, a place of danger and rebelliousness, not of obedience and salvation; a menace, in the traditional imagery Damian uses, to edification.

God's judgment of the wicked monks, the second apparent "miracle of judgment" in the **Life**, is unattractive in the same way as that of chapter 10; He did not bring immediate judgment - judgment without any opportunity for repentance - on even those who persecuted Jesus. This time Damian is explicit about the **symbolism** of some of the story. Although there were flesh-and-blood brethren at Bagno - in contrast to the evil count of chapter 10, who is very likely to have been entirely a type - the anonymous monks of this story are nevertheless again used clearly as representative figures.

Their entire reaction to their success against the **beatissimus Christi miles** is a parody of the final joy of the victor over the devil; which joy is attendance at the heavenly banquet, the marriage feast of Christ and the soul. This is first indicated in their description as **quasi proiecto gravi onere levigati**; a phrase commonly used for the freeing of the soul from the corruptible body at the moment of a blessed death. The brethren of Bagno seek equivalent joy in worldly voluptitude. But as Damian was later to preach:

> **Non nos mundi huius** dulcedo **falsa demulceat, non carnalis illecebrae** voluptas **luxuriosa resolvat. Nusquam certe praeceptum in Veteris Testamenti caeremoniis invenitur, ut mel sacrificiis misceatur. Per quod intelligitur, quia his, qui Deo vitae suae sacrificium offerunt, nullam Deus carnalem vult inesse dulcedinem, nihil in eis vivere, quod ad carnalem pertineat voluptatem.**[9]

On the contrary, the monastic foretaste of the true banquet,

traditionally symbolised by the rest[10] which for these brethren is so rudely shattered - the rest that follows Compline - is the contemplation described in the immediately preceding and succeeding passages of the same sermon.[11]

As the feast of the Bagno brethren is thus symbolic, so are their punishments. The worst of the sinners suffers a punishment similar to that described in yet again the same sermon, a punishment there referred to two Old Testament texts:

> **Nam iuxta Salominis sententiam: Qui mollis et dissolutus in opere suo, frater est sua opera dissipantis[12]; nimirum qui in moribus suis molles ac fluidi sunt, more aquae praecipiter ad ima defluunt ... nam, transeunte eodem populo** [the children of Israel at the Jordan], **aquae superiores ad instar montis intumescunt, inferiores vero in mare mortuum delabuntur[13]; quia profecto ex eis qui baptizantur, alii in accepta coelestis gratiae** dulcedine **perseverant, alii in peccatorum amaritudinem defluere, reprobe vivendo, non cessant, et velut in maris mortui salsuginem** corruunt, **dum sapiendo terrena, per pravae vitae declivia ad mortem tendunt.**
>
> **Nos autem non sic, dilectissimi, non sic, sed ad veram sapientiam** animum **transferentes, sic per Dei misericordiam in virtutum studeamus alto proficere, ut in vitiorum pudeat voraginem** declinare.

Thus, as in chapter 10, the judgment of God that leads to death is described in a highly allegorised context and is a direct result of the choice of the damned, implicit in the very nature of his course; the predictable working out of a divine prescription rather than the effect of a particular divine intervention. The monk falls from the bridge because he has lost his footing.

The punishment of the brethren whose members are injured in the collapse of their edifice is of a different status; the monks are not the agents of the excessive snowfall. As in the case of John Gradenigo, however, whose leg has been broken in chapter 15, this is

not an irreversible punishment and has the potential to be more an admonition, such as that which has preceded Gradenigo's sanctification. Here Damian does not repeat the phrase **iusto Dei iudicio**; it seems that this time there **is** a particular divine intervention, but it is no longer a final **judgment.** Judgment to damnation has threatened Romuald when he has thought to care for only his own salvation. It has destroyed the subordinate monk who has rejected his authority, tantamount to preference for the **dulcedo** of the world. These are the two extremes of eremitical and coenobitic sin. The model hermit must accept his **aliene salutis cura**; his subordinate coenobites must obey. Romuald has awoken to this in time, and the brethren of Bagno have received their warning.

Damian's sources

Although heavily redacted to carry Damian's own argument and resonant with Scriptural echoes, this chapter appears to have been formed by the conflation of three oral stories. The first section into which the chapter has here been divided is a summary of the initial relationship between the saint and the house of Bagno, although how much Damian knew about this is not at all clear from this minimal statement. The second section is a summary of a story about Romuald, Hugh and Palazzolo, probably told principally at that benefited house itself, which was near Ravenna. The third story, now the fifth section, would have concerned damage and injury suffered at Bagno in the course of a winter landslide into the Savio, already interpreted in terms of punishment or admonition for voluptuous living to explain the evident displeasure of God.

The conflation of these three stories is most likely to have occurred

in two distinct stages and to have produced the third section, where the monks conspire against Romuald and expel him. The reason for the conflation of the first and last stories seems obvious enough; the admonitory disaster struck after the house had strayed from the principals of its founder (it is inconceivable that it could have struck while he was still there or the community faithfully preserved his spirit). Such a conflation could well have been made in the oral telling and antedate Damian's use of it. The conflation of these Bagno episodes with the story about Hugh and Palazzolo seems less natural, and it produces a hiccup in the text in the third section, where Damian follows on to give the money as the reason for the brethren's disquietude with Romuald and then adds the second reason that the saint had already been in a state of tension with them over their depraved customs, the money then disappearing from the story. Damian does not say whether Romuald took it with him or the brethren stole it, but they are not punished as thieves or for avarice, which suggests that the sins originally given as explanation of the collapse did not involve Hugh's money. Damian has probably tacked on the money story from Palazzolo himself because he believed it to provide a better explanation than unspecified depravities.[14]

The remaining section, the fourth, concerning Romuald's temptation to singularity, is quite crucial to Damian's argument. It is clearly his own editorial interpolation drawing great significance in the life of Romuald and an important lesson about eremitism out of stories that appear to have been focused originally on disasters at Bagno and Palazzolo and to have involved Romuald only incidentally.

Literal historicity

There seems no reason to doubt that the three oral records were based in authentic reminiscence, although in each case in only a bare fact. Information that Damian does not give may be more important than what he does give.

The relationship between Romuald and Hugh of Tuscany, and the latter's custom of distributing largesse to the holy without conventional reservations of rights over them, for example, has been interpreted by M.B. Becker as marking a new phase in monastic/lay relations, contemporary with the rising concern over simony[15] (which will engage Romuald later in the **Life**), and may have been of greater importance than Damian could have realised.[16]

The apparently unofficial character of the **aliene salutis cura** at Bagno is certainly important. Having been first a coenobite and having gained the permission of his abbot at Sant 'Apollinare to leave for the desert, Romuald has not fallen into Marinus's anomalous status and is a fully acceptable hermit and master of monks and hermits, but no one has appointed him to be a master (even at Cuxa, where Abbot Guarin might have been supposed to have exercised authority, the other hermits have simply deferred to him and there has been no suggestion of any kind of subordination to the abbot), no one approves his many geographical moves, and his relationship with the regular authorities of the various communities with which he becomes involved is always undefined.[17] This may well reflect the historical reality. In his article on Romuald, Tabacco studies an imperial donation from as late as 1021 in which Romuald, designated only as **vir religiosus** and **vir venerabilis**, is clearly regarded as already the juridical superior of

an abbot at Biforco who is himself a hermit, even a dual succession being envisaged, but it is not so clear just what Romuald's juridical status there is.[18] Throughout the **Life** the saint is deferred to simply because he is obviously holy. In spite of the reforms that had already taken place and are reflected in the work, Western monasticism was still very much less regularised than it was later to become, and it seems that Damian and his informants were equally unconcerned about the vagueness of this model hermit's official status. It is sufficient for Damian to note that God does not permit him to live for his own salvation alone.

NOTES

1. Cura.
2. In chapter 39, Romuald will be depicted as a virtual martyr to monks.
3. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp.49-50, summarises Damian's distinction between solitude (Christian, sociable, and essentially charitable) and singularity (self-important and animal).
4. Indeed, a constant trouble to his own conscience. Cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp.73-74.
5. Concupierat.
6. Ad vite voluptatem.
7. Quiescerent.
8. VR p.45n.1; **Matthew** 22:37-40.
9. **Sermo** 64, PL144, 874CD.
10. Cf. c.1 n.12 above.
11. **Sermo** 64, Cf. PL144, 874C - 875B.
12. **Proverbs** 18:9.
13. **Joshua** 3:13-16.
14. Cf.**Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1001C-1002B, where Damian links the text, "Quia radix omnium malorum avaritia est" (1st **Tim.** 6:10) with passages from **Gen.** 15, the source of much of the demonic attack imagery of the last two chapters, to show why "terreni quique contra proximos iurgiis et contentionibus saeviunt."
15. M.B. Becker, **Medieval Italy: Constraints and Creativity** (Bloomington, 1981), p.27.
16. Franke accepted the evidence of the **Vita Sancti Bononii** auctore Ratberto, cc. 6&7, that Hugh requested from Romuald in his eremitical colony at Pereo (which figures in chapters 21, 22, 26, 28 and 30 below), an abbot and three experienced monks for his foundation of St. Michael at Castro Marturi. Tabacco, however, has argued against the authenticity of this work. Cf. VR p.43n.1.
17. Except in the abortive case of chapters 22 and 23 where he is forced to become the abbot of Sant 'Apollinare.

18. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, p.99. Tabacco also points out that the division of authority was not the same as at Pereo.

CHAPTER 19 ST. APOLLINARIS COMMANDS ROMUALD TO RETURN TO SANT 'APOLLINARE

This very short chapter has a single origin:

> Now at another time the sainted man stayed not far from Catria. And when he had been there for some time, the blessed Apollinaris appeared clearly to him and ordered him with great authority to proceed to his own monastery [Sant 'Apollinare] and dwell there instead. The sainted man counted [this] as by no means something to be disregarded, unhesitatingly abandoned the place in which he was staying and hurried energetically where he had been sent.

Damian's argument

No reason is offered for this command, no indication as to whether on his arrival at Sant 'Apollinare Romuald established another cell or returned to one of those he had previously occupied (chapter 16) or dwelt instead in the **coenobium**, and no suggestion as to why and when he subsequently felt this command to have been superseded and left again for the solitude described in the next chapter. The sole lesson seems to be his immediate and unquestioning obedience to a command to return from apparent solitude to a monastery. It has probably been placed here as proof that Romuald had not yielded to the temptation to singularity in the previous chapter, being in that sense a virtual footnote to it, and it may well be also preparation for the equally short next chapter, which has a much fuller sense when taken together with it than on its own.

Damian's sources

These few sentences appear more like the introduction to a story than like a story complete in itself; the ancient martyr might be expected to recall the holy hermit to his house to do something specific there,

which the rest of the story will then relate. If a longer story is sought for which this could be the opening, it is perhaps to be found divided between the present chapters 16 and 22. Here in the space of seven chapters there are these three references to Romuald's presence at Sant 'Apollinare on apparently unconnected occasions. All this to-ing and fro-ing, this unexplained instability, seems unlikely, especially as the intervening sojourns at Bagno, Catria, Comacchio (chapter 20) and Pereo (chapter 21) are listed as **aliquando, aliquando, etiam quodam tempore** and **alio quoque tempore** respectively; there is no claim that the account is chronological. At the beginning of chapter 16 Romuald has returned to Sant 'Apollinare (to the eremitical cells there) immediately **post patris correptionem** at San Severo, the occasion, as Damian believes, of his return from Cuxa. If this is laid aside and the three references to Sant 'Apollinare are brought together, they form a single, coherent story in which Romuald, having been converted to religion in that house by a vision of St. Apollinaris, is called home from a sojourn at Catria by a second apparition of the community's special saint to dwell in seclusion there for some time before finally (in chapter 22) being called to its abbacy, an appointment which he thereupon declares has been revealed to him five years earlier (by St. Apollinaris?). Such an order of events would make sense from Sant 'Apollinare's view, presenting the holy man's progress to the abbacy of the house as coherent and divinely ordained, whereas Damian makes it plain in chapter 22 that he did not believe it to have been so and therefore would not have felt obliged to present it thus.

However all this may be, it is clear that Damian has drawn on a fragment of oral tradition here.

Literal historicity

There is nothing to be learnt about Romuald's historical life here unless the above speculations are correct and the apparition story is authentic. Tabacco's use of this chapter in his article on Romuald as evidence that Romuald's first sojourn in the Apennines (at Bagno) was of **carattere provvisorio** and that the Ravennate still exercised a stronger attraction on him[1] can be valid only if both Damian's chronology and isolation of these sentences from the other records of Romuald at Sant 'Apollinare are reliable, which seems very doubtful, and, implicitly, if the vision is presumed to be a psychological projection rather than either a genuine apparition or a piece of embroidery on the monastic record.

NOTES

1. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, pp. 85-86 n.54.

CHAPTER 20 HE TURNS GREEN IN THE MARSH OF COMACCHIO

Damian continues with a second very short chapter:

> At a certain time again, the venerable man was enclosed in the marsh of Comacchio that is called Auregario. From this place he subsequently departed so wholly swollen and hairless, because of the excessive stench of the mire and the corrupt air of the marsh, that his appearance was not at all the same as it had been when he was enclosed. For his very flesh was so completely green that it scarcely seemed different from the colour of a newt.

Damian's argument

The series of five chapters on metaphorical mortification is thus completed by Romuald's flesh turning green, the colour of a corpse and the symbolic colour of martyrdom **in voto.** His passion of fear and doubt about death in similar circumstances in chapter 16 is succeeded by a sepulture in which he persists until there is real debility of the flesh without any **cogitatio** intruding to trouble him. His calmness in the face of mortal physical danger will be proven in the fire of the next chapter. Romuald's self-mortification by ascetic rigour was complete before his return from Cuxa. His mortification at the hands of both demons and monks is now in its turn complete; although they will both molest him repeatedly in later chapters, they will never again unsettle his mind with **cogitationes.** Romuald is dead to this world.

This chapter seems to stand in almost direct opposition to St. Athanasius's record of St. Antony after his twenty years of battles in seclusion in the fort of the Outer Mountain:

> Obstupuerunt universi et oris gratiam et corporis dignitatem, quod nec per quietem intumuerat, nec ieiuniis, daemonumque certamine faciem eius pallor obsederat; sed e contrario, quasi nihil temporis exegisset, antiquus membrorum decor perseveravit.[1]

Athanasius immediately explains this as indicative of the purity and stability of his soul. Damian is clearly not suggesting a putrefaction of Romuald's; evidently he has a different understanding of the relationship between body and soul, but that is not really his point. If he had the much-read ancient exemplar in mind, as it seems likely he did, then there seems to be an implication that Romuald's is a fuller mortification. After his virtual scourging and temptation at Bagno, Romuald has obediently returned in the tiny chapter before this one to Sant 'Apollinare for no apparent reason; that act of self-resignation and this mortification have been immediately juxtaposed. Antony has been sorely tempted by demons in his solitude; Romuald has also been tempted by monks.

Damian's sources

This comparison of the two texts suggests that the chapter, in its present form, is Damian's own more than an oral record. It seems difficult to judge, however, whether there was in fact a story of Romuald's debility in the swamps, its original function now unclear, of which this chapter is a redacted summary, or whether Damian has pieced together this picture from his own knowledge of the reputation of the Comacchio marshes, which were near Ravenna and around which other religious associated with Romuald also lived[2], together with the bare fact that Romuald had had a cell at the place named.

Literal historicity

Whichever way the chapter has been produced, however, Damian's evidence, although luridly exaggerated, may well be true.

NOTES

1. **Vita Antonii**, c.13, PL73, 143B.
2. Bruno of Querfurt believed that visits to religious in these swamps was harmful to the health of Otto III, who died not long afterwards. Cf. Vfr. c.3 p.720, and c.25 below.

CHAPTER 21 ROMUALD'S PRAYER EXTINGUISHES HIS FLAMING CELL

This very short chapter may be divided in two; (i) the first sentence, introducing the location; (ii) the remainder, telling the story.

Damian's argument

The opening sentence is quite straightforward:

(i) He goes to Pereo.

> And at another time he dwelt on the island that is called Pereo, which island is about twelve miles distant from the city of Ravenna.

(ii) The cell catches fire.

> And while he was staying in a cell there with a certain venerable man - in fact his disciple William - the little dwelling's close-built walls [were] suddenly taken aflame. Then [the fire] rose on high and, now releasing all its force, began to prevail right across the roof. The sainted man withdrew at once to the refuge of [his] customary defence tactics; not to drag outside what he had stored away there, not - as is usual - to scatter the shingles of the roof, not to throw around great quantities of water, not to wind [himself] by any effort to extinguish the fires. He was [not] driven [to that], but poured out only prayer, and divine power quickly extinguished the hissing balls of fire.

Damian's argument

This is yet another miracle of questionable acceptability in its literal sense. Faith moves mountains but the Lord helps those who help themselves and God is not to be tempted. To requisition a miracle on one's own behalf, to refuse to exert any effort in looking after the property that has been entrusted to one, is dubious saintly conduct. If God's purpose in such a miracle were simply to prolong

His servant's earthly life and demonstrate His special interest in him, Romuald could still have begun to prepare to put out the fire himself.

Symbolically, the chapter testifies to Romuald's eschatalogical status. Chapter 16, the first of the series of the five chapters before this, dealing with Romuald's metaphorical passion and sepulture, has been introduced by demonic attack through cogitation on death. In chapter 18 an evil monk has suffered judgment unto death for his hope in worldly voluptitude; Romuald has kept his in God. There is judgment by water and judgment by fire. The evil monk has perished in the one; Romuald is now tested in the other. Once again the edifice stands representative of the Christian heart:

> **Fundamentum enim aliud nemo potest ponere, praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Iesus. Si quis autem superaedificat super fundameatum hoc ... uniuscuiusque opus manifestum erit: dies enim Domini declarabit, quia in igne revelabitur: et uniuscuiusque opus quale sit, ignis probabit. Si cuius opus manserit quod superaedificavit, mercedem accipiet.**[2]

Having passed through a passion of doubt with fear intact, he now has a sign of the salvation for which he lives. Again, as in chapter 16, he makes recourse to nothing but divine **virtus**; but no longer is he troubled first by demonic **cogitatio.** The attack does not begin to unsettle him from his **quies.** He has arrived at the serenity that traditionally characterises God's saints.

Damian's sources

The specific details Damian gives of both the location and the name of the cell-mate - an unusual reference to a named witness - indicate that although Damian's interest in this story is primarily

allegorical, there was an oral story about some kind of marvellous escape from fire at Pereo, probably a straightforwardly literal miracle story.[1] In its present form it has been adapted to fit Damian's own schema of the saint's progress.

Literal historicity

Monastic fires, especially in all-wooden structures, were common enough; there is no reason to doubt that this one occurred. Whether Romuald in fact believed that it was unnecessary for him to try to put it out, however, is questionable. As he would certainly have prayed as well, the extinction might in any case be attributed to divine intervention.

NOTES

1. In the **Dialogues, II, Vita Sancti Benedicti**, c.10, St. Gregory records a story in which an idol that has been dug up causes a phantasmal fire in a monastic building. The tumult of the brethren as they rush about to try to extinguish it arouses Benedict, who immediately sees the reality of the situation and prays; upon which the brethren too see that there really is no fire. It is possible that this has influenced Damian's narration of Romuald's fire story. The two chapters, however, are basically very different: a literal story of a phantasmal fire in one case and an allegorised story of an actual fire in the other.
2. **1st Corinthians** 3:11-14.

CHAPTER 22 THE ABBACY OF SANT 'APOLLINARE IS FORCED ON ROMUALD BY OTTO III

This important chapter can be divided historiographically into five: (i) the first two sentences (to p.48 1.1), in which Romuald is elected abbot; (ii) the third to fifth (to p.48 1.6), in which the emperor visits Romuald; (iii) the sixth and seventh (to p.48 l.13), in which the abbacy is imposed; (iv) the eighth (to p.48 1.15), in which Romuald declares his foreknowledge of this; (v) the remainder of the chapter, in which the brethren repent their choice.

Damian's argument

(i) Sant 'Apollinare elects Romuald.

The opening sentences set the scene:

> At this same time the young Emperor Otto, wishing to settle the abbacy of Classe, gave the choice to the brethren, that they might undoubtedly elect whomever they themselves chose. They immediately and unanimously asked for Romuald.

(ii) The emperor passes a night in Romuald's cell.

> Now the emperor, uncertain whether it would be possible to summon the blessed man to the royal court by messenger, determined to go to him in person. The sun was already setting as he arrived at his cell. Romuald, because he had received a great guest in a small house, deemed it appropriate to give him his own little bed[1] for his rest[2], although the king declined the coverlet because he judged it very rough.

These sentences return to images of chapters 16 and 18, images of the going down of the sun and subsequent rest. As there, the setting of the sun is an image of the end of the world and of death[3], and the rest - a standard image of the religious life - is a foretaste of Heaven[4]; for, although Damian does not yet mention it, the young emperor had comparatively little time left to live and must soon face

his Judge. Otto's acceptance of rest in Romuald's cell, a cell proven as it already is by the test of fire, and indeed in the saint's very bed[5], indicates his incorporation into the saint's own spiritual security, despite his inability to accept the harshness that goes with it. This is the only time anyone is "gathered" into the saint's rest without embracing the **sancta conversatio**, but Otto will subsequently promise to do so (in chapter 25).

There is also an implicit statement of the superiority of the holy man to the great man of the world, a return to that traditional hagiographical theme introduced already in chapter 1. The emperor recognises that he must pay court to Romuald. This contrasts with the very different court scene of the following sentences:

(iii) Romuald is forced to accept the abbacy.

> Now when the morning came, the king took him to the palace with him and after a while began to press him with many prayers to accept the abbacy. As [Romuald] was reluctant and quite refused [his] assent to the royal petition, the king, on the contrary, threatened excommunication and anathema by every bishop and archbishop and a whole synodal council, and eventually [Romuald] succumbed to the impending coercion and accepted the rule of souls.[6]

Rest, contemplation, is found in the hermit's cell; coenobitic abbacies - a form of **regimen** - are imposed in the palace of the greatest man of **regimen** there is, as different a house from the hermit's cell as can be imagined, the most powerfully temporal. The recognition of the **beatus'** superiority still holds good there - the emperor begins by petitioning him - but the emperor can threaten the hermit with superior ecclesiastical authorities. Before the end of the eleventh century, imperial domination of ecclesiastical authorities in the way implicit in the threat would have been regarded

by many reforming churchmen as illegitimate, even outrageous. But Damian, like Romuald himself, represents a reform mentality pre-dating the Gregorian and even to the end of his life took a view of ecclesiastical power that did not exclude the participation of temporal authorities. The emperor's attitude to ecclesiastical authorities, as Damian records it, is not intended to scandalise.[7] The contrast is not between spiritual and temporal authorities but between authority and eremitism. Damian was later in his own life to resign the cardinal-bishopric of Ostia imposed on him by papal authority. That Romuald was intended to exercise, instead of this **animarum regimen**, a kind of freelance **aliene salutis cura** has already been indicated in chapter 18.

(iv) Romuald declares his foreknowledge of this.

> He used to tell, however, how this appeared as no novelty at all to him, but had been divinely revealed to him five years before.

This brief note does not fit very well into the developing argument. It records a prophecy that almost undermines the plausibility of Romuald's resistance to the emperor's pleas. The next chapter, however, makes it quite plain that Romuald's resistance was not the result of any merely conventional humility but was genuine reluctance. It therefore seems as though Damian has included this record **in spite** of rather than because of his own interpretation of events, perhaps as a reminiscence too well known to be omitted. This will be considered further below.

(v) The brethren resent his severity.

> And so he ruled the monks under the strict discipline of the **Rule**, and from that he allowed no one to deviate without

> punishment. In short, neither the nobleman nor the learned man of letters presumed to stray to the right or to the left by deeds [that were] not allowed, or to wander from the straight [path] of [their] straight conversation.[8] The sainted man, in short, fixed the eyes of his heart on Heaven and, as he would submit to God on every matter, did not fear displeasing men. Now the brethren he had taken on thought on this too late, and blamed themselves because they had earlier asked for this man to be set over them; and then they lacerated him with a great deal of detractive tale-bearing[9] and tormented him with the hard barbs of strife.[10]

The scourging imagery of this chapter again picks up the themes of chapters 16 to 18. Once again the demons are attacking Romuald through unruly monks. What is new is that this is balanced, and indeed preceded in these sentences, by similar imagery used in reverse. "Discipline" - **disciplina** - has already been used in the **Life** for corporal punishment.[11] It indicates beating as well as instruction and regulation, and not only beating to promote learning and correct disobedience but also voluntary beating regarded as an act of devotion[12], a form of martyrdom **in voto**. This is not to say that Damian is portraying Romuald as an abbot who physically laid into his charges with unusual zeal, but that the strictness of his regulation of their lives is to be understood metaphorically in such terms; **disciplina** is not an entirely abstract noun. The monks strike back with verbal lacerations.

What Damian does not seem to indicate is why the discipline has an evidently negative rather than a positive effect on the monks. There is no suggestion, as there was with Marinus in chapter 4, that Romuald is indiscreet. Damian can scarcely be suggesting that he **ought** to have allowed the brethren to deviate from the straight path or to have pleased men by not submitting in all things to God. The explanation is probably to be found in **affectus**. The cause of the severity, Damian informs the reader, is that Romuald has the eyes of his heart

fixed on Heaven. The implication is that the monks who resent him have theirs fixed on the world. In this case, Damian is again (as in chapter 3) characterising coenobitism as worldly, at least by comparison with eremitism. In chapter 26 Damian will write that at the model group hermitage at Pereo:

> **Multis fratribus aggregatis et per cellas singulas constitutis, tanto fervore heremitice conversationis rigorem et in se et in aliis tenuit, ut illorum vita omnibus ad quos fama eorundem pervenire poterat, mirabilis haberetur.**

At Sant 'Apollinare, on the other hand, Romuald is not to gather brethren into his own, eremitical **conversatio**, but is forced into an inferior, communal **conversatio** to which he cannot possibly assimilate himself. The model hermit's **aliene salutis cura** is not appropriately expressed in such **animarum regimen.** The emperor has found rest in Romuald's cell; Romuald has found only turmoil, the antithesis of contemplation, in the office imposed on him in the emperor's house. The two ought not to be confused.

Damian's sources

The five sections into which the chapter has here been divided seem to have disparate origins and must be considered separately.

The record of the complete freedom of the monks to elect whomever they please - the first section - is orthodox for a Cluniac-reformed house, although there is an implication that the emperor knew who would be chosen.[13] The election is clearly legitimate, even a good example, protecting the reputations of both hermit and emperor. The record, however, is extremely brief. Although it is by no means implausible, it is questionable whether it is a minimal summary of an election story actually known to Damian or whether he has deduced it from

knowledge of Sant 'Apollinare's status and the mere fact that Romuald was abbot; especially considering that the last section of the chapter is derived largely from St. Gregory the Great's **Life** of St. Benedict, in which an afterwards regretted free election by the brethren is also found.

The visit by the emperor to Romuald's cell in the second section is possibly derived from a different episode in their relationship. In chapter 30 it will be recorded that the emperor built a monastery in honour of St. Adalbert on the verges of the Classe estates, at Romuald's instigation, while this latter was at Pereo. Similarly, in chapter 28, missionary work from Pereo associated with Romuald is associated also with Otto. The emperor, moreover, is known to have spent an extended stay at Sant 'Apollinare (recorded in chapter 25)[14] during which Damian has him promise Romuald that he will renounce his empire and retire to the monastic life. This last event occurs in Damian's chronology some time after Romuald's renunciation of the abbacy, and what he is doing back at Sant 'Apollinare is not explained. Pereo was in fact very near Sant 'Apollinare, and it is known from Bruno of Querfurt that the emperor made many visits to the hermits in that area during his stay there. It therefore seems likely that the story of the emperor in the saint's bed is a part of the memory of that visit. This would explain also Damian's chronology and geography at the beginning of this chapter where he has it, after several chapters beginning "at another time" or "at a certain time", that the imperial settlement was decided upon **eodem tempore** as the fire in the cell at Pereo, which implies that it was from there that Romuald was removed to office, when it seems much more likely that if Romuald was remembered at Sant 'Apollinare as having been called home from Catria by St. Apollinaris himself (chapter 19), and if, as is

certain, his main stay at Pereo was later, the hermitage from which he was removed to office was one of those on the Sant 'Apollinare estates named and described in chapter 16. For the sleeping in the cell would then indeed have occurred roughly **eodem tempore** as the cell fire, and Damian's schematisation will have led him to associate this visit with the appointment to office. This would leave two original stories. The first would relate in series the recall of Romuald to his abbey by St. Apollinaris himself (chapter 19), Romuald's reclusion there (chapter 16) and his elevation to the abbacy (chapter 22). It is quite likely that the single sentence constituting the fourth of the sections into which this chapter has been divided would then belong also to this series. As it stands, Damian does not say **how** it was divinely revealed to Romuald five years in advance that he would be appointed to the abbacy; possibly through the vision of the ancient martyr: "Return to my house, enter a cell there and prepare your heart for the fatherhood of the monastery to which, be it known to you, you will be appointed", or a message to that effect. The monastery's memory, in other words, would be of the appointment to the abbacy by divine prescript announced by holy apparition, with Romuald's life up to that point guided to that end. The second story, involving the hospitality, would belong to another series, concerning the emperor's (unfulfilled) promise of conversion, other elements of which will occur later in the **Life**. The rearrangement and conflation, once again, would arise from Damian's own schema of Romuald's spiritual progress.

The third of the five sections contains nothing solid: pleas, refused assent, threatened excommunication by parties not present; nothing actually happens.

Such sentences are possibly an interpretative deduction on Damian's own part rather than the record of a circulating story. He knows that Romuald would not accept the abbacy without pressure, for that, as he indicates in the next chapter, is a return to the world and a betrayal of his divine vocation, and he knows that the only pressure to which a saint can submit is the threat of spiritual censure; therefore, the emperor pressed the abbacy on him in this way. It would certainly seem more likely to be Damian's interpretation of the appointment than Sant 'Apollinare's.

The last section of the chapter is, as Tabacco notes, derived largely from an episode in St. Gregory's record of St. Benedict. Tabacco notes the **mimesis** of several precise phrases. The imagery of mutual discipline and laceration with which Damian begins and ends this passage, however, is not found in that exemplar. Nor is the fearlessness in displeasing men. In St. Gregory's story the brethren are incited (to murderous conspiracy) because they have been accustomed to illicit living and Benedict no longer permits this. He displeases them, but incidentally. Romuald seems to displease his charges almost deliberately[15]; fixing the eyes of his heart on God, he is rigidly unyielding to the brethren, showing none of the loving discretion towards individuals of varying capacities that is enjoined on abbots by Benedict himself in the **Rule.**[16] It is made very clear in chapter 45 that Romuald regarded abbacy - **any** abbacy - as equivalent to secular lordship, and Damian, whose own attitude was not very positive[17], draws no very sympathetic portrait of any other abbot throughout the **Life**, while presenting one after another as corrupt. Romuald was clearly right to resist the office. As with St. Antony in the tombs in chapter 16, therefore, Damian has apparently dressed an argument of his own (or his own and Romuald's) in the clothes of

ancient authority.

Literal historicity

If the above analysis is correct, only the second section (the emperor in the bed) and the fourth (the foreknowledge) are probably of oral origin, and the latter of these may well be hagiographical elaboration already in the oral version. This leaves just the cell visit at Pereo, quite possibly belonging really to a later date. It is likely, however, that the emperor supervised Romuald's election, that it was a free election, and that Romuald was reluctant to accept the appointment, even if Damian's direct evidence on these points was weak, because the status of the monastery and the eremitical preferences of the abbot-elect indeed point that way.

The imperial connection has attracted attention in the various studies of Romuald, but Damian does not show, here or later, any more than a superficial knowledge of the relationship between the two.[18] It may well be that Otto barely knew Romuald until their later meetings at Pereo.

NOTES

1. Lectulus; this can also mean "bier" or "tomb".
2. Ad quiescendum; this too can have connotations of death.
3. Cf. c.16 p.5.
4. Cf. c.1 n.12.
5. On the traditional interpretation of the lectulus of the **Song of Solomon** as the place where the soul is occupied in desire and aspiration for God, cf. Leclercq, **Otia monastica**, op.cit., p.40. Damian himself comments, "Fortes enim lectulum Salomonis ambiunt, dum intimam pacifice Redemptoris nostri requiem sancti quique indefessa desiderii sedulitate custodiunt"; **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1146C.
6. Animarum regimen.
7. In spite of his subsequent relationship with Hildebrand, Damian never became a true Gregorian. Cf. Blum, **Peter Damian**, pp.22-28. In "The Monitor of the Popes: St. Peter Damian", in **Studi Gregoriani per la storia di Gregorio VII e della riforma**

gregoriana, raccolti da G.B. Borino, vol. 2 (Rome, 1947), pp. 459-476, Blum treats of Damian's later considerable involvement on papal affairs, especially from the pontificate of Victor II (1055-7) and argues that his attitude to imperial involvement in reform changed after the death of Henry III in 1056. Cf. also Cantin, op.cit., pp. 24-25. Cf. also c.25 n.4.

8. A recte conversationis ... rectitudine deviare.
9. Detractionum susurrationes; on these sins, although with perhaps finer distinctions than Damian intends, cf. J. Hennessy, "Contumely", and K.B. Moore, "Detraction", in **The New Catholic Encyclopaedia**.
10. Scandala; discord, hatred, embitterment, quarrels, etc.
11. Of Romuald by Marinus, c.4.
12. Cf. c.63 below.
13. On this election, in the light of the Cluniac reform, cf. Franke p.67. On free elections and royal confirmations (or interventions) more generally, cf. U. Berlière, **Les élections abbatiales au moyen âge** (1927), pp. 3-5.
14. Cf. c.25 n.10.
15. Bruno records explicitly that Romuald was a deliberate displeaser of men. Vfr. c.2 p.719.
16. **Ben. Reg.** cc. 2 & 64. There is a radically different attitude to monks in these chapters from that described of Romuald.
17. Cf. **Carmina et preces**, 221, PL145, 972-974.
18. This will be considered further below, in relation to the much-discussed cc. 25 and 30.

CHAPTER 23 ROMUALD RENOUNCES HIS ABBACY AND CALMS REBELLIOUS TIVOLI

Four historiographical units can be identified in this chapter: (i) the first sentence (to p.49 l.5), in which Romuald leaves Sant' Apollinare; (ii) the second and third sentences (to p.49 l.8), in which Damian outlines the causes of the dispute between the emperor and Tivoli; (iii) the fourth sentence (to p.49 l.10), attributing the solution to Romuald; (iv) the final sentences, outlining the solution.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald leaves Sant 'Apollinare.

> And so, as Romuald saw both that his own perfection was to some extent impaired and that the practices of [the monks] had been converted precipitously to the worse, he went determinedly before the king, and although, together with the archbishop of Ravenna, [the king] made no light resistance, Romuald cast down the rod in the view of them both and left the monastery.

Damian thus completes the argument of the previous chapter with a return to the rod imagery that has been used several times already in the **Life.** This time the rod, the instrument of **disciplina** with which Romuald has saved Sergius from his lust to return into Egypt in chapters 13 and 14, is cast down in imitation of the casting down by Aaron of his rod before Pharoah in preparation for the release of the people of Israel from the Egyptian bondage. Bruno of Querfurt gives a similar account, in which Romuald casts down **pastoralis virga**, and the rod is indeed to be understood on one level, as this suggests, as the surrendered abbot's staff. But Damian does not specify that the rod is only pastoral. It has already supported Romuald himself on his journey back to Ravenna from Cuxa. Aaron's rod, as Damian explains elsewhere is the spiritual wisdom of Christ which swallows up all the

wisdoms of the world and unites all the wise in the Church. To this extent, Aaron's rod and the release from the Egyptian bondage are prefigurative of the release from Law to Spirit that comes with the birth of the Church. Aaron does not cast down such a rod as though he is returning it to a Pharoah from whom he has previously received it, which seems to be more or less the signification with which the imagery is left in the present context if the rod is limited, as by Bruno, to a **pastoral** symbol. The rod of Aaron is cast down to produce a divine sign that God is about to release his people - not the wielder of the rod alone, but the whole people whom he leads - out of their bondage to a worldly power whose own rods are inferior. So in using such imagery, not qualified as is Bruno's - Damian is indicating something more than merely that Romuald was released from a particular spell of office he did not find productive, the argument both of Gregory in relation to Benedict's resignation and of Bruno in relation to Romuald's own[1], both noted by Tabacco. The movement from the cell to the abbacy is a retrogression equivalent to the children of Israel returning from the desert to Egypt or from the church to the Synagogue, or of Sergius returning from his monastery to the world. The children of Israel were commonly understood typologically as prefiguring monks. If Romuald is to play the role of Aaron, he cannot return and remain himself in their bondage.[2]

(ii) Otto besieges Tivoli.

> The king, moreover, was then besieging the city of Tivoli. For the citizens had killed their famous duke, named Mazolinus, and had taken up arms and expelled the king himself from their walls.

Here the condition of the worldly city parallels that of the monastery. The emperor's experience with rebellious citizens is like

Romuald's with the brethren of Bagno and even, in its lesser degree, Sant 'Apollinare. There is demonic agitation at Tivoli too. Romuald destroys the danger, restores the peace and so saves souls:

(iii) Romuald restores peace to the city as a divine agent.

> And so there is no doubt that the blessed Romuald was sent there by divine providence, and by his coming destroyed, with reserve peace[3], the peril to so many souls.

(iv) A settlement is agreed.

> For it was agreed between the parties that the Tivolese would demolish part of [their] walls in the king's honour[4], would give hostages and would deliver the duke's killer in chains to his mother. Softened by the sainted man's so many prayers to God, she both forgave the killer's crime - after he had been cruelly beaten - and permitted him to return home unharmed.[5]

St. Gregory had justified St. Benedict's departure from the rebellious monastery with the argument that he might produce **fructus melior** for God elsewhere.[6] In the next chapter of this **Life**, Romuald will produce **alius boni operis fructus** at Tivoli. So the settlement of the rebellion is the first fruit proving the justification of his departure.

Where Benedict had retired back to solitude, however, and then involved himself in the establishment of new monasteries, Romuald does not return to the cell from which he was removed but begins to travel, spreading salvation and conversion as he goes, and moving towards his involvement in missionary activity to the northern pagans. To this extent the casting down of the rod and the liberation from the official **regimen** of souls marks a real advance to a new plane of activity. Romuald's extra-official **aliene salutis cura** has so far involved him in saving relations only with those with whom he has had

contact in religious places; monks in monasteries or visitors to him in hermitages. Now he is sent out to carry the **virtus** of God with him, in the next chapter through something he says, bearing fruit through "the seed of the word".

In the present chapter, however, it seems to be by his simple presence and his prayers that the good is effected. For although at first sight Damian may give the impression that he is describing a Romuald involved in political negotations, he does not in fact explicitly claim that the saint was in any way a party to the pact made and in the mollification of the ducal mother the effect is seen of his pleas to God rather than to her. All evil from the time of the Fall itself was universally accepted as resulting from disobedience to God, rebellion against divine authority; evil is a state of disorder. The demons have attempted to disorder the cogitations of Romuald and have ceased to be able to do so. Romuald has achieved this impenetrability to evil by throwing himself in prayer entirely upon the mercy of God. As he does the same for Tivoli, the peace of good order under authority is restored for it too. The rebels give in on all points and the emperor makes no concessions, but the offended mother is merciful and the killer is disciplined but not destroyed. The mechanism of Romuald's intervention is not explained, but it is apparent that this happens when the saint's own perfect attention to God is unimpaired, and perhaps even if the sinners concerned are not aware - for Damian does not say that they are aware - that he is there praying for them.

Damian's sources

As in the previous chapter, the various sections seem to have disparate origins.

The departure from the monastery with the casting down of the rod is paralleled, as indicated above, in the account given by Bruno of Querfurt. This would suggest a common oral tradition, but the two accounts in fact scarcely compare otherwise and what Damian gives is only a glimpse of the event, not a full story about it. Because the casting down of the rod is so clearly a standard image of liberation, Biblically derived, and the two authors share an interest in presenting Romuald's departure to activities elsewhere as progress to more important work, it is questionable whether, to produce this single sentence, Damian would have needed to know much more than that it was the emperor who accepted the resignation.[7]

The sentences in which the emperor besieges Tivoli after the death of the duke are based in an element of oral tradition. This is an extremely incomplete account of the events concerned,[8] Damian presumably having included only details relevant to his purposes. How much more he may have known and from what precise source the information came to him is not clear. The imperial party having subsequently spent time at Sant 'Apollinare, it is not unlikely that his source was a biased, garbled and already incomplete version remembered there.

The fourth section is probably some more of the same story, with Romuald's presence and intervention woven in by Damian himself. As suggested above, no firm claim is made that Romuald was directly

involved.[9] Damian knew that Romuald had been by Tivoli (where he counsels an anchorite in the next section), and he may have known that the rebellion at Tivoli was settled by mediation without the sacking of the town; putting two and two together, it was thanks to Romuald.[10]

The brief third section is plainly editorial.

Literal historicity

If this analysis is correct, the second and fourth sections contain questionable historical details[11] not really relevant to Romuald, and the first section the mere detail that Otto wanted Romuald to stay abbot, which does not seem unlikely.

NOTES

1. St. Gregory justifies St. Benedict's departure with the argument: "Ut ego existimo, ibi adunati aequanimiter portandi sunt mali, ubi inveniuntur aliqui adiuventur boni. Nam ubi omnimodi fructus de bonis deest, fit aliquando de malis labor supervacuus, maxime se e vicino causae subpetant, quae fructum Deo valeant ferre meliorem. Vir itaque sanctus propter quem custodiendum staret, qui omnes unanimiter se persequentes cerneret?" **Dialogues**, II, 3, 10. Damian's Romuald, on the other hand, appears anxious to leave and no such full excuse is regarded as necessary. Bruno writes, "hic ipse Romualdus pastoralem virgam in conspectu imperatoris proiecit, qui alium lucrari non potuit." Vfr. c.2. p.718. The inference of this is that the emperor will take up the rod and give it to somebody else who will earn more profit with it; a use of the Aaron-before-Pharaoh typology that does not work very well. Neither of these authors is so generally unsympathetic to the abbot's office as is Damian; on which cf. Cantin, op.cit., p.22, and the uncharacteristically limp opinion of Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 32 & 34-35.
2. In this whole argument Damian is in conflict with the **Ben. Reg.** c.2: "Et ita timens semper futuram discussionem pastoris de creditis ovibus, cum de alienis ratiociniis cavet, redditur de suis sollicitus. Et cum de admonitionibus suis emendationem aliis subministrat, ipse efficitur a vitiis emendatus." Abbot Delatte commented on this: "the first benefit of his charge will be his growth in interior watchfulness. The very fact that he has to carry other souls naturally leads him to watch over himself. A man might give himself some freedom if he were

independent of others; but he is more careful when he is the father of a family..."; P. Delatte, **The Rule of St. Benedict** (London, 1921), p.55. Gregory's argument is just compatible with Benedict's own insofar as Benedict's apparently assumes the abbot will be making some progress in his work, which is not so in the case Gregory describes. Damian takes Gregory's argument further; the very cause of Romuald's flock's rebellion has been that he has had the eyes of his heart fixed on Heaven, his own holiness first (the correct priority by the eremitical soteriology Damian expresses with some forcefulness in Op. 12, **De contemptu saeculi**, especially the latter paragraph of c.27, PL145, 280CD). Similarly, Damian does not bother to record that Abbot Romuald has exhausted all his spiritual means on his flock, as Benedict requires if he is to avoid damnation: "Tantum iterum liber erit, si inquieto vel inobedienti gregi pastoris fuerit omnis diligentia attributa, et morbidis earum actibus universa fuerit cura exhibita; **Ben. Reg.** c.2.

3. Sequestra pace; the image is of Romuald as a depositary of peace, which he is able to distribute as required.
4. Ad regis honorem; connotations of recognising his sovereignty.
5. As Tabacco, VR p.50 n.(g) points out, in the context this means only "unmutilated".
6. Cf. n.1 above.
7. On abbatial resignations and the proper role of bishops in them, cf. Berlière, op.cit., pp. 64-71. Bruno does not mention the archbishop.
8. A summary of this rebellion can be found in E.R. Labande, "Mirabilia Mundi: Essai sur la personnalité d'Otton III", in **Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale**, vol. 6 (1963), pp. 469-70.
9. There is no other evidence that he was, although intervention by other pious personages of the imperial party, most notably Bernward of Hildesheim, is recorded. Cf. Labande, op.cit., p.469. As Damian believed Romuald to have exercised a spiritual magisterium over the emperor, any awareness of such religious intervention could only have supported a supposition on his part that ultimate credit was due to the saintly merits of Romuald.
10. St. Odilo saved Pavia by intercession with Henry II and Conrad II. Cf. R.G. Heath, **Crux Imperatorum Philosophia: Imperial Horizons of the Cluniac Confraternitas, 964-1109** (Pittsburgh, 1976), p. 56.
11. Other sources confirm neither Romuald's presence at Tivoli at the time of the rebellion, nor the perpetration of the murder by a single criminal nor the conspirators' Tivolese identity.

CHAPTER 24 ROMUALD COUNSELS THE FUTURE ST. VENERIUS

This long chapter divides historiographically into six: (i) the first sentence (to p.50 1.6), in which Damian excuses himself for introducing it; (ii) the second and third sentences (to p.50 1.12), in which Venerius is mistreated in his monastery; (iii) the fourth (to p.51 1.1), in which he leaves the monastery; (iv) the remainder of the first paragraph and the first sentence of the second (to p.51 1.15), in which Romuald advises him to seek his abbot's permission and he does so; (v) the remainder of the paragraph, except for the last sentence (to p.52 1.11), in which he lives and dies in sanctity; (vi) the last sentence, in which his sanctity is credited to Romuald.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald bears further fruit at Tivoli.

> And the venerable man brought forth other fruit from [his] good works at Tivoli, which, it is my opinion, ought not to be passed over in silence.

Thus Damian excuses himself for introducing a digression in the narrative to the life of another saint who really has almost nothing to do with Romuald.

(ii) Venerius suffers in the monastery.

> For a certain blessed man named Venerius had first begun to dwell in a monastery, [his] humility and simplicity so great that all the brethren looked down upon him [and] mocked [him], and regarded him as deranged and even insane. And so some used to pummel him, others to drench him with the dirty water with which the washbasins were cleaned, others again to pull him to pieces with abuse in various squabbles.

Here Damian recalls in relation to Venerius two of the traditional

themes which have already been used in relation to Romuald; holiness of life as apparent madness to those who do not understand it, and attack on the holy by unruly monks. The purpose of this is to set up a comparison between the two saints such as to allow Damian to contrast Romuald's response to these problems with the unacceptable response of Venerius which he is about to relate.

(iii) Venerius removes himself to solitude.

> And as he considered that it was not possible for him to preserve his mind in a state of tranquillity among so many adversities, he abandoned company, hastened for refuge into solitude [and] there endured for six years, without wine or any cooked food, in the aridity of very great strictness.

Thus Venerius acts almost in parallel with Romuald and leaves coenobitism. His devotion and his ascetic **conversatio** remain admirable. Romuald will have to correct him solely on one central issue.

(iv) Romuald teaches him the primacy of obedience.

> [When] asked under whose regime he lived, or to whose judgment he showed obedience in his conversation, he replied that, having been released from [anyone] else's command, he followed [the course] which seemed most expedient to him. Romuald said to him: "If you bear the cross of Christ, above all you must not abandon the obedience of Christ. Go, therefore, and [when you] have received the consent of your own abbot, return and live humbly under his jurisdiction, for the edifice of sacred work, which a good will builds,[1] humility raises up[2] and the virtue of obedience lifts on high."[3] Offering these and many other edifying admonitions, he taught him how to resist his cogitations [and] how he could fight off incursions of evil spirits, and he left him, thus strengthened and instructed, in great joy.
>
> [Venerius], therefore, thankfully embracing the sainted man's instructions, went straight to his abbot, received his consent and returned at once to [his] beloved solitude.

Venerius has become, by the definition of St. Benedict, too like a

sarabaite:

> **Qui bini aut terni, aut certe singuli sine pastore, non Dominicis, sed suis inclusi ovilibus, pro lege eis est desideriorum voluptas: cum quicquid putaverint vel elegerint, hoc dicunt sanctum, et quod noluerint, hoc putant non licere.**[4]

Returning to live in solitude under the rule of the abbot and (as it will turn out in the next section) on the monastic property, he is fulfilling the provisions of the ancient councils of Vannes (465)[5] and Agde (506).[6]

(v) Venerius advances to anchoritic sanctity.

> Now as he wished to dwell on the estate of his monastery, he went up to a certain rock inaccessible to all human paths and utterly remote from the conversation of men. There he dwelt alone for four years, destitute of all human support. Except for three small loaves he had taken with him from the monastery he did not eat bread, did not drink wine, did not taste anything cooked, but lived on only the fruits of the trees and the roots of the grasses. In the same rock, moreover, there was a certain cavity where water collected in the wintertime and on this the sainted man lived throughout the summer. After a time it became known that a servant of God was staying there, and many [people] began to converge on him, bearing provisions of food and ministering to him what seemed to them to be necessary. He needed none of them and offered them all to the cattleherds and other needy. And at his urging, the bishop of the place allowed a small church[7] to be built and consecrated there. In this he himself some time later died and was found by some men who were seeking for him, bowed before the altar as if by way of prayer, lying on his elbows and knees. Many were the signs - the miracles - that the Lord deigned to work there through him.

It thus becomes apparent that Venerius is not a normal hermit but an anchorite. Damian does not here make the distinction, but to understand the picture he is now painting, it is necessary to consider his later definition:

> **eremitarum ordo bipartitus est: quorum videlicet alii cellulas incolunt, alii passim per eremi deserta gradientes, certas aedes habere contemnunt. Sed qui per eremum spatiando discurrunt, anachoretae; qui vero cellulis contenti sunt, usitato vocabulo eremitae discuntur: quibus nimirum omen commune factum est**

> **speciale ... Anachoretarum autem iam tunc filii Jonadab primitiae fuerant, qui, sicut Jeremias testatur, vinum et siceram non bibebant** (Jer.XXXV) ...[8] [etc.]

Damian follows this definition with the remark that anchorites have become extremely rare and that, although they are to be regarded with reverence, he will say nothing more about them (in that **opusculum, De suae congregationis (ordinis eremitarum) ordinibus**). Here in the **Vita Romualdi**, however, he digresses to depict an anchorite, rare as his kind may be, for no apparent reason other than to prove that the sanctification of a Christian of yet another category was attributable to the **magisterium** of the model ("cell-type ") hermit:

(vi) His sanctity is fruit of Romuald's teaching.

> And thus, in sum, thus did the good earth return abundant fruit, for which it had received the seed of the word from the mouth of Romuald.

With this return to the seed imagery of chapter 6, for which asceticism has been the ground preparation, Damian further justifies Romuald's departure from his abbacy. Now that he has renounced that **animarum regimen**, his **aliene salutis cura** has clearly borne much better fruit - peace in the worldly city and a miraculous shrine in the desert places. The emperor (and implicitly the empire) will come next, and then the pagans beyond the mountains.

Damian's sources

The sections into which the chapter has been divided seem once again to have disparate origins.

The first and last sentences, crediting Romuald with Venerius's fruitfulness, are clearly editorial. They annex to the Life a

hagiographical reminiscence of another saint in which Romuald probably scarcely figured.

The second and third sections are loosely inspired by written exemplars. Venerius's apparent madness and his mistreatment by the brethren in the second section are, as Tabacco notes, in the image of the abuse of a nun in the **Vitae Patrum**, although the message is not exactly the same.[9] The departure to solitude to preserve tranquillity in the third section is after the model of St. Gregory's Benedict already employed in relation to Romuald himself in the two preceding chapters, to which is attached a statement of the ascetic rigour maintained in that solitude lest the reader should misunderstand and think the sin in Venerius's departure resides in his **conduct** in solitude. As it is not possible, however, for Damian to have deduced that all the details given applied also to Venerius, there must also be an **oral** background to these sentences, possibly already shaped by the written exemplars, at least sufficiently similar to suggest them. In the form in which they now appear, these sections carry an implicit argument for serene solitude in preference to perturbed coenobitism, but it seems likely that the original function of the second was more simply to introduce Venerius, to explain how he came to be an anchorite (possibly by speculation) - which function both sections together now fulfil - while the third is the slightest remnant of a story of his **conversatio** somewhere other than at the shrine site of the fifth section, redacted to Damian's own ends. All that can be said with certainty, however, is that these sections are in far-from-original forms.

The fifth section contains an account of the habitation, spirituality and final sanctity of Venerius, and of the miraculous powers of his

shrine, of sufficient interest to circulate orally over long distances. Although Damian has possibly summarised it, this is likely to be more or less what he actually heard about Venerius. It is most likely that it travelled north through the agency of pilgrims to the shrine it mentions.

The counsel that Romuald gives in the fourth section directly reflects Damian's own beliefs. It is quite standard material[10], derived from the **Rule** and ancient canons, as suggested above.[11] It is unlikely that a story about Venerius's sanctity would originally have included this section, and even as the chapter now appears, it could be excised, together with the first and sixth sections, and a meaningful story of Venerius would remain. It is more likely that Venerius was remembered as a holy anchorite whose sanctity was already sufficiently renowned for Romuald to wish to visit him; it is hagiographically normal for holy hermits to counsel the visitors who resort to them in their desert places rather than **vice versa.** As Damian's own beliefs require Venerius's sanctity to be attributed to Romuald, and as there is no sign that there was ever any defect in Venerius's asceticism, it seems likely that the hagiographer has deduced for himself what counsel Romuald found it necessary to give.

Literal historicity

There is nothing to be learnt about the historical life of Romuald here beyond the bare fact of a visit to renowned Venerius; probably to take counsel of him.

NOTES

1. Edificat.
2. Erigat.

3. Extollat; all three of these can be building terms.
4. The first of the points made by Benedict in his definition - that a sarabaite has never been tried by a rule - does not apply. The necessity for the abbot's permission for departure is assumed by Benedict, **Reg.** c.29.
5. Quod ita demum fiet, ut intra eadem monasterii septa manentes, tamen sub abbatis potestate separatas habere cellulas permittantur. Canon 7, J.D. Mansi, **Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio**, 31 vols. (Florence and Venice, 1757-98), vol.7, col. 954. Cf. Franke, p.117 n.107.
6. Servandum quoque de monachis, ne eis ad solitarias cellulas liceat a congregatione discedere, nisi forte probatis post emeritos labores. Canon 38, Mansi, op.cit., vol. 8, col. 331. Cf. Franke, p.116 n.106 and also c.4 n.22 above.
7. Basilica.
8. Op.15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, PL145, 338A-C.
9. VR p.50 n.3. Tabacco's reference is slightly incorrect. The passage is **Vitae patrum**, V, lib. 18, n.19, PL73, 984A-985B. The nun concerned deliberately simulated folly and pretended to be possessed by a demon. This centres the argument, as is emphasised in the passage itself, on the tradition concerning the conflict of worldly and spiritual wisdom. She does not leave the convent but silently suffers the abuse she has almost deliberately brought upon herself. Damian has adjusted the sense to emphasise the abuse a saint (not simulating insanity) will almost inevitably suffer at the hands of those who do not understand; this represents a considerable dilution of the folly theme. Like St. Gregory on St. Benedict, he does not recommend persistence in such coenobitism because of its effect on serenity. The two policies are at variance, and Damian neutralises this alternative tradition by characterising Venerius's departure without permission as sinful, shifting attention from the fact that the holy person of the **Vitae patrum** model would not have thought to depart at all.
10. Much of the sentiment of these sentences is to be found in the **Ben. Reg.** c.7.
11. Cf. also Tabacco, VR p.51 n.1.

CHAPTER 25 ROMUALD CONVERTS TAMMUS TO MONASTICISM AND ACCEPTS OTTO'S PROMISE OF CONVERSION

This chapter may be historiographically divided into seven: (i) the first sentence (to p.52 l.18), in which the relationship between Otto and Tammus is recorded; (ii) the second and third sentences (to p.53 l.3), concerning Crescentius; (iii) the fourth and fifth sentences (to p.53 l.7, completing the first paragraph), in which Tammus makes his conversion; (iv) the first sentence of the second paragraph (to p.53 l.9), in which the emperor's benevolence to monks is recalled; (v) the next sentence (to p.53 l.12), in which he undertakes penitence; (vi) the remainder of the chapter except for the last sentence (to p.54 l.4), in which he undertakes further penitence; (vii) the last sentence, in which he promises conversion.

Damian's argument

(i) Tammus is Otto's intimate.

> And again at the same city [Tivoli] the most blessed man converted a certain Tammus, a German, who was so intimate and dear to the king that it is said that each of them would wear the other's clothes and the hands of the two would often meet in one dish at a common meal.

Damian opens with this reminiscence because he is going to make a single argument out of two conversion stories which, although related, are somewhat divergent.

(ii) Crescentius is deceived and killed.

> For Crescentius, the Roman senator, incurred the king's displeasure and sought refuge on the mountain called Sant' Angelo, and because its fortifications are impregnable, confidently prepared to defend himself against the king's siege. Tammus, on the king's command, guaranteed an oath of safe-

> conduct to him. In this way Crescentius was deceived, and he suffered capital punishment, as though arraigned for high treason, through pressure from the pope, who was his enemy. The emperor afterwards took his wife as a concubine.

This extremely partial account of the Roman ructions of 998 is also given principally to unify the chapter. It establishes that Otto and Tammus were in a joint state of sin, from which Romuald would be able to save them together.

(iii) Tammus makes his conversion.

> Since, therefore, Tammus was held [to be] both an accomplice to the deception and guilty of perjury, he was ordered by Romuald on that account to leave the world. When he immediately sought permission from the king, not only did he obtain [it] easily, but indeed he acted [upon it] with great alacrity.

Here Damian introduces terminology, **obnoxius** and **relinquere**, which will be used in the next paragraph in relation to Otto. In this chapter Romuald's **virtus** to restore good order where it has broken down reaches into the heart of the empire itself, to Rome and her emperor. These stand representative of virtually the whole of Christendom, and after this Romuald will turn his attention outward to the pagans beyond. More than ever is his renunciation of the abbatial **animarum regimen** vindicated. In fact, however, Otto's conversion is not to be effected, but merely promised. This is a great weakness in Damian's argument. Tammus, on the other hand, not only effects his conversion, but will go in the next chapter with Romuald to the mission training community at Pereo. His conversion story is quite perfect for the purpose and by emphasising his intimate relationship with the emperor and then relating the two stories in parallel as though they are a single event, Damian rectifies the weakness in his argument as far as possible. The emperor is **all but** converted and his sin in the Roman rebellion reversed.

(iv) Otto favours monks.

> For the aforesaid emperor was very well-disposed to the monastic order and devoted to the attendants of God with exceedingly great affection.

The story of Otto himself is to be built on a series of contrasts to demonstrate by the end of the chapter just how far he has "begun ... to be subject to Christ." These contrasts are all based in the New Testament theme of true strength in apparent weakness, the emperor reversing his worldly glory. This first sentence of the passage puts the argument in the context of transcendence. The monks identified by the traditional title of **famuli Dei**, His household attendants, compare (although not exactly) with Tammus as **familiaris** of Otto himself. They are representatives of a higher court, and so Tammus's and the emperor's (unfulfilled) renunciation of the pinnacle of worldly society precedes their **entree** to the lower orders of a heavenly **familia**.

This is followed by the first of the self-humiliations before sanctity:

(v) He undertakes penitence.

> He himself, moreover, confessed to the blessed man about the same crime, proceeded barefoot, by way of penance, out of the city of Rome, [and] in that way continued on right to Monte Gargano, to St. Michael's Church.

This is in fact to be the only way in which Romuald is involved in the emperor's penitence, even in Damian's account.

(vi) He undertakes further penitence at Sant 'Apollinare.

> He also stayed for the whole of Lent in the monastery of the blessed Apollinaris in Classe, with a few members of his entourage. There he [was] intent on fasting and psalmody just as greatly as he was able [to be and] he was clad beneath his gilded purple with a hair-shirt worn against the flesh. And [although] glittering coverlets were spread upon [his] bed, he scratched the tender members of [his] delicate body in matting composed of rushes.

The importance of vestments to Damian has been noted in relation to chapter 2; the vestments of a priest there signify Christ Himself, Whom he has, in the Pauline imagery, "put on." Otto has not entirely "put off the old man", but with the hairshirt he has begun to put on the new. The vestments concerned in this case are not priestly but those of empire and martyrdom **in voto**. In wearing the two together, the holier closer to the flesh, the emperor signifies a religious dedication of his **imperium**, an assimilation of it in his own person to the order of the **famuli Dei**. The empire is being "gathered", through Romuald, into the sanctity of the martyrs and the angels, of St. Apollinaris and St. Michael. Some of those "attached" to the emperor, his **adhaerentes**, are the first to be gathered in turn through him.

When Otto has visited Romuald before imposing the abbacy of Sant' Apollinare on him in chapter 22, taking him from the cell to the royal palace to do it and so attempting to assimilate the holy man to the world, the coverlet of the saint's bed, place of desire for God[1], has been too rough to be spread over the imperial person. Now the intention is reversed, and Otto, about to promise Romuald his own assimilation to the **sancta conversatio**, is able to sleep under a particularly harsh coverlet.

(vii) He promises conversion to monasticism.

> And so he promised the blessed Romuald that he would renounce the empire and take the monastic habit; and he to whom countless mortals were subservient, now himself subject to Christ the little pauper, began to be His debtor.

Thus, still avoiding mention of the emperor's failure to effect his promise, Damian adds in the theme, so recurrent in the **Life** and indeed dominant in these centuries, of imitation of Christ.[2] Here it takes a special, royal form. Christ the King humbled Himself to serve the needs of the poorest (carrying overtones of the weakest and humblest) of His mortal subjects, the greatest imaginable act of unmerited royal grace. In doing so He did not in fact lose His kingship, but in a paradoxical way fulfilled it, becoming the Saviour of His people. His means of doing this was the taking upon Himself of all the debts of transgression owed by them, to expiate them in the self-sacrifice of His own life. If Otto is to fulfil the potential of his own earthly (but sacral) kingship, he must carry on from his temporary penitence and likewise renounce secular power and glory altogether. It is not necessary for this to take place immediately - neither Romuald nor Damian could desire the empire to be constantly vacated in a succession of very early abdications - but heavenly **conversatio** is the teleological rationale of every Christian life, monastic **conversatio** is its anticipation, and the intention to be "converted" and conduct of secular life with that end in view is therefore to be encouraged. The concept of poverty and indebtedness on which Damian draws here is thus rather limited, literary and theological in nature, lacking the full social value that religious poverty was to develop in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but there are major political implications, for the emperor who becomes in this way the debtor of his peoples becomes an image of their Saviour.[3]

The significance of this for the theory of both empire and monasticism

is very great. The empire is rendered holy neither directly from heaven nor, from precisely this point of view, through the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but through ascetic religion. The monasteries and hermitages occupy the first place in, and characterise, the Christian community. This appreciation of the intimate relationship between monasticism and empire marks the Damian of 1042 as a man indeed of Romuald's and Otto's era.[4]

Damian's sources

Although so clearly assimilated to traditional Christian themes, all sections of this chapter seem to be based in oral records of Otto and Tammus. They could not, however, have originated as a single story.

The conversion of Tammus is associated in the first of the sections identified above with Tivoli and in the second and third with Rome. The particular rebellions of these two cities to which Damian refers occurred in fact approximately three years apart, in 1001 and 998 respectively. In the next chapter Damian will again associate Tammus's conversion with Tivoli, and Bruno of Querfurt records that Romuald was in Rome when he converted him to his company.[5] It is known from other events which Bruno describes as occurring during Romuald's same period in Rome that this was about the time of a further rebellion of that city, one following closely upon Tivoli's. This would mean that Tammus's conversion is indeed associated in a way with both Tivoli and Rome, but Damian has confused the story by conflating two rebellions of Rome. Tammus's conversion in fact has nothing to do with Crescentius.[6] Nor has Otto's. The emperor fled to Sant 'Apollinare after reverses in his attempts to put down the later Roman rebellion. His penitential walk to Monte Gargano and his

penitence at Sant 'Apollinare were undertaken years apart and for different reasons. This suggests that the chapter has been composed from fragments of three stories, concerning respectively the conversion of Tammus, Otto's earlier campaign in Rome, and his seclusion at Sant 'Apollinare after the later one. All three of these are most likely to have come to Damian from brethren at that monastery or others in the vicinity of Ravenna where the emperor was well known, and the conflation of the stories about distant Rome and Tivoli may have already begun before Damian heard them.

The first and third sections of the chapter probably come in essence from the story of Tammus's conversion. The record of the intimacy of Otto and Tammus in the first could conceivably have originated in a story about the emperor, but it would almost be required in a conversion story of Tammus, to preserve memory of his identity and impress on hearers the significance of the conversion. That Romuald was responsible for the conversion, related in the third, is almost certainly true and would be central to the story. The gap of years from any possible involvement in the Crescentius episode, however, and Damian's use of terminology which he will repeat in relation to the emperor's conversion suggest that this aspect of the story is of his own deduction.

The second and fifth sections are most likely to have originated in a highly biased monastic account of the emperor in Rome designed to explain and applaud his penitence at Monte Gargano. The involvement of Tammus in the broken oath story of the second section does not fit very well, for Tammus does not then undertake penitence with the emperor at Monte Gargano in the fifth section, although both have confessed to Romuald and followed his penitence directions. The story

is more coherent if Tammus is omitted from the siege[7] and Romuald is omitted from the emperor's penitence.[8] These associations are required to make the story work for Damian's own purpose and are presumably of his own deduction.

The sixth and seventh sections deal with events which the monks of the Ravenna area would remember most clearly. Damian has probably recorded them more or less as he heard them. They form a single story, recalling the emperor's promise of conversion, but two different aspects of it: the background in penitence, in which Romuald is not immediately involved, and the promise of conversion, in which he is. There is a narrative hiccup between them, and a **non sequitur** in the "**promisit itaque**" which follows the record of the uncomfortable bed, indicating that Damian has perhaps omitted a great deal of this best-remembered conversion story in the interests of conciseness and the continuing unity of his own argument. In chapter 22 the emperor has visited Romuald in his cell at Pereo before imposing Sant 'Apollinare's **regimen** on him. It is more likely that that visit occurred in fact at this later stage, when Pereo was fully active and worthy of imperial interest.[9] The promise of conversion, which Bruno also records as taking place before Romuald (Bruno was himself at Pereo), would then have occurred indeed at more or less the same time as the penitence at Sant 'Apollinare, but not at **precisely** the same time.[10] The emperor left Rome for Sant 'Apollinare hastily for not entirely spiritual reasons[11] and it is indeed probable that Romuald had no involvement in that particular episode.

The fourth section of the chapter, recording Otto's special relationship with monks, is fairly straightforwardly true[12] and could have originated in either of the stories about him or in general

reminiscence.

Literal historicity

Authentic reminiscences of Romuald in this chapter, derived entirely from stories focused on others, thus seem to reduce to two: he converted the emperor's intimate, Tammus[13], to monasticism (although in Rome, not Tivoli) and he accepted Otto III's promise of conversion.[14] As Damian shows little sign of knowing the true background circumstances to these decisions, his record of Otto and Tammus in central Italy is too slight and distorted to be of much value. It is true that some of the details - for example, that Crescentius was besieged at Sant 'Angelo and afterwards killed[15], and the forced concubinage of his widow[16] - are corroborated by other sources and are probably true, but they are also generally more fully explained by those sources. Other details - for example, the emperor's promise of safe-conduct[17] - are dubious, while important information about exactly what emperor, pope and **patricius** were disputing[18], is absent altogether. The intensity of the imperial devotion at Sant 'Apollinare, however, which evidently impressed itself upon the communal memory there in Romuald and Damian's home region, is worth nothing.[19]

NOTES

1. Cf. c.22 n.5.
2. Cf. J. Pelikan, **The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol. 3, The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)**, (Chicago and London, 1978), p.106: "In the tenth and eleventh centuries there was being developed and articulated the characteristically Western understanding of Christ, so that 'the monastic period from 900 to A.D. 1100' has been identified as 'the uncompromisingly christocentric period of Western civilisation' [E.H. Kantorowicz, **The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology** (Princeton, 1957, p.61]; it was christocentric for the very reason that it was monastic ... and monastic writers vied with one another in extolling Christ as

the source of all good." On p.107, Pelikan adds, "Peter Damian ... used his writings to expound a christocentric devotion in which Christ would be the sole object of language and thought, of love and meditation". Often, in practice, Christ was represented by monastic saints; Pelikan, p.125, cites Damian's **Sermo** 45, PL144, 746, and comments, "If the Virgin Mary herself was an imitator of the humility of Christ, then the imitation of the saints by believers was, in turn, an imitation of Christ", and p.126 cites the present sentence of the VR as evidence of the representative leadership thus exercised by such saints. Cf. also c.26 section (v).

3. It was with Otto III and his successor, Henry II, the two emperors mentioned in the VR, that the sovereign began to be depicted in the decoration of liturgical books in the form of Christ reigning, and his name to appear on vessels, etc. Cf. Fleckenstein, op.cit., p.158 and Heath, op.cit., pp. 134-36. Bruno records that, according to John Gradenigo, Romuald taught his followers: "pone te ante omnia in presentia Dei cum timore et tremore, quasi qui stat in conspectu imperatoris." Vfr. c.29 p. 738 Cf. Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**, p.317, and Tabacco, **Romualdo**, p.89 n.65.
4. On the Cluniac position, with which Damian was aligned, cf. Heath, op.cit., especially pp. 131-32, 147 and 162.
5. Vfr. c1. p.718. Meysztowicz, n.63 p.63, claims that Bruno makes no mention of Tammus's conversion; Bruno in fact calls him "Thomas".
6. A summary of Crescentius's revolts and Otto's reactions can be found in Fleckenstein, op.cit., pp. 169-71. Cf. also Labande, op.cit., pp. 310, 456-58, 460 and 467-70, and Meysztowicz pp. 33-36.
7. There appears to be no corroboration of Damian's claim that Tammus confessed perjury towards Crescentius to Romuald. Meysztowicz, p.34 and n.24 p.59, rightly draws attention to Bruno's failure to mention it. Meysztowicz explains this with the argument that Bruno was interested only in information directly relevant to the five martyrs of Poland, but the fact remains that Damian's claim is uncorroborated.
8. Otto's remorse was in fact probably kindled by that other famous hermit, St. Nilus, in response to such sins as his mutilation of the antipope Philagathos (who does not appear in Damian's account). Cf. Labande, op.cit., pp. 457 & 461, and Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**, p.313.
9. In Bruno's account, Otto (not necessarily in person) removed Romuald by force from his hermitage to appoint him abbot, but the constant royal visits to Pereo came at this later stage; Vfr. c.2 pp. 718-19. By Damian's chronology, Romuald will not arrive back at Pereo until the next chapter, but it is clear from Bruno that it was around Ravenna, not Rome, that the conversion promise was made. Labande, op.cit., p.471 n.270 comments on the chronology problem. Cf. also n.14 below.
10. The emperor and his whole entourage took refuge at Ravenna from March to May; cf. Labande, ibid., p. 471.
11. Cf. Vfr. c.2 p.718.
12. The religious intensity of the young Otto is discussed by Labande, op.cit., passim (pp. 297-313 and 455-76)
13. Tammus may have been a brother of Otto's childhood tutor, Bernward, afterwards bishop of Hildesheim, also a great favourite of the emperor; cf. Labande, ibid., pp. 301 ff. and 458; but also Tabacco, VR p.54 n.2.

14. There is really no justification for Meysztowicz's argument, pp. 33-39, that Otto made Romuald **two** conversion promises, the first at the time of the penitence at Monte Gargano in February 999 and the second at Sant 'Apollinare in 1001 (cf. n.9 above). Meystowicz bases his argument on this chapter of the VR and c.30, which clearly does not support it, and on a far-fetched interpretation of two statements by Bruno that Otto had already had his conversion in mind before he made the promise of 1001 (Meysztowicz n.26 pp. 59-60); cf. also Labande, op.cit., p.471 n.270. Meysztowicz deals more convincingly with the objection that Otto could not have intended a monastic conversion at all because of marriage plans; pp. 47-8.
15. Cf. Labande, op.cit., pp. 457-8.
16. Ibid., p.460; also Tabacco, VR p.53 n.1.
17. This is also corroborated by some other sources, but not universally accepted by modern historians. Cf. Labande, op.cit., p.458.
18. Cf. n.6 above.
19. Franke, p.16, pointed out how close to Romuald's hermit circle the young emperor appears in the accounts of events in Rome and Pereo offered by Bruno of Querfurt, who was of the inner imperial circle. Thietmar of Merseburg also chronicled the imperial penitence at Ravenna; cf. Labande, op.cit., p.471. On the specially close links between empire and Church more generally in Otto's policy, leading him to ascetic practices and the hairshirt in other places too, ibid., pp. 462, 465 and 469.

CHAPTER 26 ROMUALD LEADS HIS CONVERTS FROM MONTE CASSINO TO PEREO

This chapter is divisible into five historiographical units: (i) the first sentence (to p.54 1.12), in which Romuald takes Tammus and Bruno of Querfurt to Monte Cassino; (ii) the second sentence (to p.54 1.14), in which he is sick there; (iii) the third to fifth (to p.55 1.5), in which he takes an ass in exchange for a gift horse; (iv) the sixth (to p.55 1.7), in which he returns to Pereo; (v) the remainder of the chapter, in which the **conversatio** there is described.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald leads his converts to Monte Cassino.

> Romuald, therefore, with that Tammus of whom we have spoken and with [that] most renowned man Boniface [Bruno of Querfurt], now a most felicitous martyr the Russian church glories in having, and with other German converts, travelled from the town of Tivoli to the monastery of St. Benedict which is situated on Monte Cassino.

Thus Damian saves the completion of his account of the conversions at Tivoli to juxtapose it with the foundation, later in this chapter, of the eremitical group at Pereo. Romuald leads the converts first from the restless worldly city to the home of western monachism. Damian suggests no reason why he did this and records nothing of what they did at Monte Cassino, about what status they took there, how long they remained or under exactly whose **regimen** they passed their time. He is satisfied to record that the converts passed through St. Benedict's house on their journey of conversion.

(ii) He is ill there.

> There, in fact, he was seriously ill but by divine mercy quickly recovered.

This illness is recorded also by Bruno of Querfurt and is presumably authentic to the tradition Damian received. In Bruno's account, however, it is not, as here, the whole story of Romuald's stay at Monte Cassino; on which Damian refrains from commenting in any way. The sojourn in St. Benedict's own house remains unexplained but apparently contributes more to the edification of Romuald's Teutonic converts than to his own. This is the only **coenobium** in the **Life** at which Romuald stays without suffering at the hands of the brethren themselves.

(iii) He exchanges his horse for an ass.

> Now he had moreover a horse, quite fine, which had been given to him by the Slavonic king Boleslav's son - [who had been] made by him a monk. This, in [his] zeal for humility, the sainted man exchanged, and in a profitable deal the praiseworthy trader took an ass. [As he] longed so greatly indeed after our Redeemer, Who had sat on the back of a little ass[1], the venerable man rode even this animal gladly.

It has already been implied (in Chapter 22) that the abbacy of Sant' Apollinare in Classe had an intrinsic association with the Ottonian royal palace and was radically dissociated from Romuald's cell at Pereo. Romuald is now exchanging, in the mother house of coenobitism where he has gone on the journey following his renunciation of the abbacy, a royal horse, given to him by a royal coenobite, to return to Pereo on an ass like that Christ rode into Jerusalem to His proclamation as King of the Jews: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King [Christ] cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass..."[2] Once again is thus echoed the great New Testament theme of the inversion of power and glory in Christ, true power in this - worldly weakness and true glory in this - worldly humility. In the previous chapter the Emperor Otto has sanctified his **imperium** by submitting it to monasticisation under Romuald. The full glory of the

saint as an image of the Highest King is now revealed as he prepares to travel, his converts from the imperial household with him, to establish the model group hermitage at Pereo.

The title Damian applies to Christ is not, however, King but **Redemptor.** The humility of the Son of God expressed in the riding of the ass is only the forerunner of the great paradox of His humiliation upon the Cross which is at the same time His greatest glory and act of power; the Cross was indeed labelled, however ironic the intention, with the royal title, King of the Jews. The idea of participating in the Crucifixion is a constant of Christian literature from the time of St. Paul and more particularly of monastic and eremitical literature from the time of the Egyptian fathers. Damian himself had Fonte Avellana dedicated to the Holy Cross[3], and he has already used this theme repeatedly in the **Life.** His treatment of it so far, however, has been in relation to Romuald's ascetic rigours; it is the aspect of self-abandonment and suffering, participation in the passion as sacrifice, of which there has been reminiscence. Sepulture **in voto** has also appeared. The **glory** of the Cross, one of the themes of the ancient martyrs[4], has not hitherto been reflected. Damian now moves backwards in the chronology of Christ's life to the multifariously significant royal journey which precedes the Crucifixion. As he travels from Monte Cassino to Pereo, Romuald will be as though travelling from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem the royal city. Anagogically, this **follows** the Crucifixion as surely as historically it precedes it. For anagogically, Jerusalem is Heaven itself; Christ's very Ascension was later to be also from Mount Olivet. It is another commonplace of monastic literature that in the monasteries there is a foretaste of this heavenly Jerusalem, eternal life with God

Himself. But St. Benedict's monastery here is only in the place of Mount Olivet, which was a symbol - so appropriate to Benedict - of peace, but only the starting-point of the royal journey. At the end of the chapter it will be Pereo which is the royal city, where the converts from the imperial household who have followed the saint upon the ass win themselves fame, even become a cause of wonderment, by following him into the redemptive self-humilitation of rigorous ascetic eremitism. The two aspects of the journey to Jerusalem which leads to passion and to religious glory will thus together characterise the foundation of the group hermitage of Pereo.

(iv) He leads his converts on to Pereo.

> And so with all these named above Romuald returned to Pereo, where he had dwelt before.

With the last words of this sentence - **"ubi dudum habitaverat, rediit"** - Damian emphasises that the converts are being assimilated to a habitation Romuald had already pioneered. This "gathering" of the followers into the holiness of the saint through assimilation to his own **conversatio**, which will underlie the remainder of the chapter, is a theme already used in the work. This, however, is the first time a hermitage has exceeded in size a small group of the saint's intimates and begun to resemble the more formally established larger group hermitages of Damian's own time.

(v) The brethren live wondrously in single cells.

> And there, to be brief, [when] these and many other brethren [had been] gathered and settled in single cells, he kept the rigour of the eremitical life with such fervour, both in himself and in others, that all whom the renown of their life could reach held it [to be] wondrous.
>
> For who would not be astonished, who would not attribute the

> change to the divine right hand, when he saw men previously clad in silks, or rather in gilded vestments, crowded together in dense, obedient columns; when he descried men accustomed to abundances of all the luxuries now content with one cowl, enclosed, without shoes, unkempt and made repentant by such parching abstinence? All, moreover, worked with their hands; some made spoons, some span, [and] others plaited nets.

Here, as he describes the first sizeable group hermitage to appear in the **Life**, the inchoate prototype of Fonte Avellana and Camaldoli, Damian's depiction of eremitical asceticism, hitherto on the plane of the mythical heroic, comes down to the more modest level of the historically probable. This is disguised in the vividness of the description. Although Damian records that Romuald **"heremitice conversationis rigorem et in se et in aliis tenuit"**, the almost impossible fasts, the floods of tears, the feats of **virtus** against the demonic powers, do not now appear as part of that rigour. This is not to say that Damian is insincere in recording that Romuald maintained his own rigour or that he did not really believe his own earlier descriptions of it. The emphasis is now on the imperial converts and, as already remarked in relation to Chapter 4, it is **relativities** that count. The asceticism of these new brethren, and Romuald's part in bringing it about, are to be judged and marvelled at for the extent of the conversion of life and the depth of conversion of heart that it proves.

Each of the hardships listed represents a reversal of the characteristic features of a life of worldly power and glory. It was suggested in relation to the previous chapter that these imperial converts to a certain extent take the place of the emperor himself in Damian's argument. He ended that chapter, **"Promisit itaque beato Romualdo quod imperium relinquens, monachicum susciperet habitum; et cui innumeri mortales erant obnoxii, iam ipse pauperculo Christo**

subiectus cepit esse debitor sui." How this would be done is what is now being described. These men are not saints but associates in the sanctity of Romuald, who stands to them in the place of the little pauper Christ.[5]

This, it may be remarked in passing, is the place of the abbot in St. Benedict's **Rule.** It has already been seen in Chapters 18, 22 and 23 that, as much as normal coenobitic abbacy is anathema to him, Romuald has an **"aliene salutis cura"** that makes him a magisterial superior to whole communities.[6] The converts follow him **"crebris obsequentium cuneis constipati."** This is as soldiers follow a general, or an emperor, and is no doubt intended as one of the contrasts between world and religion that characterise the conversion, but it also betrays a different concept of eremitism from Benedict's own in the **Rule:**

> **Genus ... anachoritarum, id est heremitarum, [est] horum qui ... monasterii probatione diuturna, qui didicerunt contra diabolum multorum solacio iam docti pugnare, et bene extructi fraterna ex acie singularem pugnam heremi, securi iam sine consolatione alterius ...**[7]

This is the solitary eremitism in which Romuald has lived in the Sant' Apollinare hermitages of Chapter 16 (and in which he will live intermittently throughout the **Life,** but for the **"heremitice conversationis rigor"** to which he has brought the imperial converts they are still clustered in the ranks. Damian evidently expects less of the new hermit than Benedict did and at the same time an earlier transition to eremitism. There is no point in lingering in the **coenobium**[8] when the group hermitage, where the monk can associate himself already into the most celestial form of the religious life, has taken over so much of its function.

Damian's sources

This chapter appears to have been fashioned out of disparate fragments of oral tradition, fused together and shaped by Gospel and patristic reminiscences into an artificially coherent narrative.

The first section, the single sentence relating Romuald's leading of his German converts from Tivoli to Monte Cassino, has already more than one origin; for it is known from Bruno of Querfurt, himself the Boniface of Damian's story, that Romuald travelled directly to Monte Cassino after laying down the abbacy of Sant 'Apollinare and took Bruno and Tammus into his company while sojourning by Rome only after his subsequent departure from that southern house. As in the previous chapter, there has been a conflation of stories about the rebellion of Tivoli, Romuald's visit to Monte Cassino and the "conversion" of Bruno and Tammus, which seem to have been in reality scarcely related events. There is no other evidence that Romuald led a whole party of imperial converts to Pereo from central Italy. Damian may have assumed this from the fact that there were others there at the time of Bruno's departure, which is described in the next chapter.

Romuald's illness at Monte Cassino, noted in the second section and recorded also by Bruno, is the fragmentary remnant of whatever story Damian heard of the visit there.

The exchange of the horse for the ass is the most clearly influenced by written sources, in this case **Matthew** 21:1-11. As Damian could not have deduced it, however, it must also have an oral background, probably connected not with Monte Cassino but with Pereo, the foundation with the royal and Slavonic links, and placed in its

present position in the order of events by the redactor. The original form and function of the story are not clear from the brief version given by Damian, but as the details about the Polish prince and his horse (slight though they are) are clearly derived from the monastic memory, whereas the picture of the saint riding the ass is clearly in the image of Christ, it is to be suspected that it concerned the Pole's conversion more than the Italian's transport and has been adapted to its present function by either Damian or another monk who saw its significance. In any case, this fragment too seems to be only very loosely related to any of the other information in the chapter.

The following sentence, constituting the fourth section and recording that Romuald returned with all his converts to Pereo, implicitly on the ass, appears to be in fact discontinuous with the story of the ass. There is no sign of any oral story of such a journey across Italy. It is probably a small piece of deduction belonging with the first section of the chapter; having made all these converts and taken them to Monte Cassino, Romuald has to get them back to Pereo.

The final section, recording the converts' life, is probably the most historically valuable. It is clearly influenced by the written tradition of ancient asceticism, as Tabacco notes[9], but this certainly influenced Romuald as much as Damian and the picture painted here can be taken as basically accurate. This is the only part of the chapter really concerned with monastic life in the Ravenna area, the ground Damian really knew.

This leaves two new points about Romuald's historical life: the unelaborated fact that he fell ill on a visit to Monte Cassino, and the depiction of the prototypical group eremitism at Pereo.

NOTES

1. Asella, compared with Romuald's asinus; Romuald is not **quite** so humble.
2. **Matthew** 21:5.
3. Previously the dedication was to St. Andrew. Cf. Cantin, op.cit., p.15 n.1.
4. Damian's special devotion to the Cross as Christ's chosen instrument of glory is considered by Blum, **Peter Damian**, p.149.
5. Cf. c.25 n.2.
6. Cf. especially **Ben. Reg.** c.1.
7. **Ben. Reg.** c.1.
8. The imperial converts evidently did not spend the canonical three years at Monte Cassino before advancing to Pereo, but it may be noted that the canon concerned referred to anchorites and Romuald's hermits are not, by Damian's definition, in that category: Cf. c.24 n.8. They have, however, satisfied the canons requiring coenobitic preparation of unspecified duration: cf. c.4 n.21 & c.24 nn.5 & 6.
9. Cf. VR p.56 n.3 & p.26 n.3. The production of handiwork by anchorites of ancient Egypt is summarised by Lawrence, pp. 5-6.

CHAPTER 27 BRUNO IS MARTYRED IN PRUSSIA

Twenty historiographical divisions may be made in this very long chapter: (i) the first sentence, where Bruno is distinguished at Pereo; (ii) the second sentence (to p.56 1.7), recording his closeness to the emperor; (iii) the third (to p.56 1.9), describing his education; (iv) the fourth (to p.56 1.13), where he is moved to emulate St. Boniface; (v) the fifth (to p.56 1.15), relating his fasting; (vi) the sixth (to p.56 1.17), where he mortifies himself in prickly bushes; (vii) the seventh (to p.57 1.3), in which he identifies himself with the martyrs; (viii) the eighth (to p.57 1.6), recording his archiepiscopal consecration in Rome; (ix) the remainder of the first paragraph (to p.57 1.14), describing his asceticism on the journey to Rome; (x) the first sentence of the second paragraph (to p.57 1.17), describing his performance of the offices as archbishop; (xi) the second sentence of the second paragraph (to p.57 1.21), about his ascetic extremes on the journey over the Alps; (xii) the third sentence of the second paragraph (to p.58 1.2), where he begins to preach to the pagans; (xiii) the fourth sentence of the second paragraph (to p.58 1.7), in which they refuse to kill him for this; (xiv) the fifth to eighth sentences of the second paragraph (to p.59 1.2), where he is thought to be after money; (xv) the remainder of the second paragraph (to p.59 1.17), where he is tested by fire and begins to make converts; (xvi) the first sentence of the third paragraph (to p.59 1.20), in which he baptises them; (xvii) the second sentence of the third paragraph (to p.59 1.20), in which the "Russian" king leaves the royal household to live with "Boniface"; (xviii) the remainder of the chapter except for the last two sentences (to p.60 1.23), dealing with Bruno's martyrdom and the subsequent conversion by miracle of the hardest hearted; (xix) the penultimate

sentence (to p.60 1.26), where Damian apologises for not saying more about Bruno; (xx) the final sentence, ascribing all his **virtus** and its achievements to Romuald.

Damian's argument

The ever-greater blessings flowing from God through Romuald from this chapter through to Chapter 30 all spring from the foundation of Pereo in the last chapter. The first of them is the martyrdom of St. Bruno of Querfurt. The present chapter, relating this, is in fact a whole **Life** in miniature. At first sight a degression from the **Life of the Blessed Romuald** as it does not tell at all of that saint himself, it takes its place in the ongoing argument as compensation for three deficiencies in Romuald's own holy achievements: preaching to the pagans, actual martyrdom and, as it will turn out in Chapter 30, failure to effect the emperor's conversion promised in Chapter 25.

Damian begins with a sentence emphatically connecting what is about to follow with the eremitical **conversatio** he has just described:

(i) Bruno shines at Pereo.

> The conversation of all these [other brethren at Pereo], however, was far transcended by that of the blessed Boniface [Bruno].

(ii) He is the emperor's intimate.

> This man, indeed, was a blood relative of the king's, and so dear that the king used to call him by no other name than "my soul".

As in the case of Tammus in Chapter 25, Damian emphasises Bruno's imperial connections so that another convert of Romuald's might stand

in the emperor's place. Damian shows no sign of knowing any story actually involving Otto in Bruno's mission work, but by this sentence he establishes not only that it was Otto's own flesh and blood who went but indeed that it was as if his very soul. As the supreme secular Christian, Otto sums up in his person all secular Christendom. By (almost) converting him and associating him with ascetic eremitism, the mission to the pagans and finally martyrdom, Romuald, with his disciple Bruno, gathers the world into the **virtus** he himself has as an eremitical associate of Christ.[1]

(iii) He is well educated and musical.

> He had, furthermore, been instructed to an advanced level of knowledge of the liberal arts and was especially commended for his studies of music's measures.

(iv) He is roused to martyrdom.

> And now, when this [man] was staying in the royal chapel and saw the church of the ancient martyr Boniface, he was roused at once to a desire for martyrdom, after the example of his namesake; and he said: "I am called Boniface also. Why, therefore, do I not owe it to be Christ's martyr too?"

As in the case of Romuald, inspired by a vision of St. Apollinaris in Chapter 2, Bruno receives his vocation a long time before he fulfils it. As with Romuald, an early event of the kind authenticates the vocation with a suggestion of predestination; his martyrdom is not unilaterally a product of his own ambition, nor is it a historical accident. Damian follows this up with two examples of his initial response in the ascetic's martyrdom **in voto**, connecting the forthcoming actual martyrdom once again with ascetic rigour:

(v) He fasts.

> And thereafter, [when] he had now been made a monk, he bound himself to an abstinence so restrictive that often he would eat on only Sundays and Thursdays out of the whole week.

This is the fasting to which Romuald has already attained at Cuxa in Chapter 9 and which has been established in that chapter as standard for the eremitical life.

(vi) He wallows in nettles.

> And not infrequently, if he saw a thicket of stinging nettles, or even thornbushes, he would fling himself in and wallow there.

(vii) He defends and explains this.

> A certain brother once rebuked him about this, saying "[You] hypocrite, why do you do this [when] everyone is present, to win approval in general gossip?[2]" He made no reply but, "The confessors may be yours; let mine be the martyrs."

This arrogant reply does not harmonise very well with Damian's description elsewhere of a Romuald who (following a precept of the **Sermon on the Mount**)[3], deliberately hid his deepest devotions.[4] The discrepancy is probably to be explained by the fact that the actual martyrdom to which Bruno will attain and Romuald will not is most meaningful when the martyr, like Christ, is fully aware of what he is putting himself in for. The distinction from Bruno's own mouth between confessors and martyrs, with which latter group he identifies himself, is the closest Damian can get to proving this for Bruno. He has already established that his martyrdom is a product of the mere confessor Romuald's eremitism, and he suggests the connection again immediately:

(viii) He is consecrated archbishop in Rome.

> Now when he in time decided, after a long life in the eremitical conversation, to go preaching, he first applied himself to going to Rome and received consecration to the archiepiscopate from the apostolic see.

This consecration is set between two journeys on which the asceticism is continued:

(ix) He mortifies himself on the road to Rome.

> A certain old monk, who accompanied[5] him there on the way from the Ravenna area, told me that on that whole journey the venerable man - with, indeed, all those who were following him - went on foot[6]; but he himself, continually chanting and going a long way before the rest, advanced[7] always barefoot. Admittedly he ate a little each day for the labour of the journey, but he lived whole days on ordinary bread and water. On feast days, all kinds of sauce[8] being unknown, he added to the daily fare fruit of some kind or root vegetables.[9]

(x) He observes double offices.

> After he was consecrated, moreover, he used to observe daily both the monastic and the canons' order in celebrating the offices of the hours.

Damian offers no explicit reason why Bruno should have done this. The context suggests that he regarded it as an ascetic feat.

(xi) He mortifies himself on the road over the Alps.

> And when he in time made for the territories beyond the mountains [north of the Alps], admittedly he was conveyed by a horse, but the venerable bishop[10], as it is said, endured the unendurable cold of the most freezing region with his shins and soles always bare; so that when he wished to get down he could scarcely detach his foot from the iron sticking to it beneath unless it was relieved by warm water.

(xii) He begins to preach provocatively among the pagans.

> And when he at last arrived among the pagans, he began to preach from his ardent breast so perseveringly that soon no one could doubt that the sainted man was asking for martyrdom.

Neither here nor later does Damian suggest what might have been the **content** of Bruno's preaching. He moves straight from martyrdom **in voto** to actual martyrdom with preaching evidently regarded primarily as a kind of ascetic work. The reason for this is implicit in what follows:

(xiii) The first pagans deny him martyrdom.

> But they feared that, as after the martyrdom of the blessed Adalbert very many of the Slavonic people had been converted by [those] shining signs, miracles, so the same might happen to them. So for a long time they held back their hands from the blessed man, ingenious in their malice, and because they did not want to kill him, cruelly spared the man most greedy to die.

Later in the chapter it is again evident that Damian believed that what converted pagans was not so much words as signs, manifestations of divine power through God's representatives. Although Damian himself has left a considerable quantity of sermons, he records little of this kind for Romuald. In the only place where Romuald is really presented as a preacher[11], he breaks down in tears of compunction. This is said to happen often and some of his hearers are moved by what he says (against simony) to want to kill him. So preaching is in both cases presented, in the context of an ascetic-devotional **conversatio**, as itself an ascetic-devotional practice. In one way or another (in the extreme case by provoking martyrdom) it edifies the preacher himself[12] and it edifies those who hear it through the revelation of ardour rather than of information. Once again the spirituality of the **Life** appears as one of **affectus** rather than intellect. The preaching functions through provocation in the same way as Romuald's feats of asceticism, the sight of the holy ardour inspiring some of the witnesses to attempt emulation in their various degrees - "converting" them, whether from heathens to Christians or secular Christians to

monks or ordinary monks to hermits - and rousing those who resist conversion to jealous anger. Preaching is thus one of the good works signalling God active in men, and it becomes most efficacious and leads to the clearest signs of God's action when those who hear it are most provoked. The holy hermit is a personified message in all aspects of his life - **conversatio**, preaching, martyrdom. Damian has already established, as early as the prologue, that in first place is **conversatio.**[13]

(xiv) The Russian king thinks Bruno is a charlatan.

> Coming to the king of the Russians, the venerable man pressed on strongly, preaching steadfastly from [his] heart.[14] And when the king saw him clad in squalid vestments and proceeding on bare feet, he supposed that the sainted man uttered forth such things not for the sake of religion but rather with the intention of collecting money. He promised him, therefore, that if he would withdraw from this kind of vain show, he himself would enrich his poverty with riches of lavish liberality. And so Boniface at once returned, without [any] delay, to the guest chamber, dressed fittingly in the most precious pontifical adornments and was thus presented anew at the king's palace. And when the king saw him so adorned in handsome garments, he said, "Now we know that it is not the hardship of poverty that drives you to this idle teaching, but ignorance of the truth".

Once again the same point comes through: the pagans do not listen to the preacher's message because of the message their eyes see in his person and his **conversatio.** The Christian reading or hearing the passage will understand Bruno's appearance differently. By comparison with Jesus's own explanation of John the Baptist, it authenticates his missionary function: **"Quid existis in desertum videre? ... Hominem mollibus vestitum? Ecce, qui mollibus vestiuntur, in domibus regum sunt. Sed quid existis videre? Prophetam? Etiam ... et plus quam prophetam. Hic est, de quo scriptum est: "Ecce ego mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam ..."**[15] The king in his ignorance has no understanding of this, but nonetheless it is the striking novelty of

such voluntary poverty, when the full significance of this **conversatio** is revealed to him, that provokes him to take Bruno seriously and try him further:

(xv) Bruno makes conversions by passing unharmed through a fire.

> Nevertheless, if there truly is power[16] in what you declare is to be believed, let two high stages[17] of wood be erected, separated from each other by a very small gap. Let them be fired from beneath, and when they are so hot that there seems to be one fire in both heaps, you pass through the middle. If you are harmed by either part, we will give you up to be consumed by those fires. If, however, you should pass through safe, which cannot be believed, we will all believe in your God without any difficulty." And when he had settled this agreement not only with Boniface but also with all the pagans who were present, Boniface, so dressed as though about to celebrate the rites of the mass, first with holy water and burning incense surveyed the fire from all sides. Then he stepped into the hissing balls of flames. He came out so unharmed that not even the least little hair of his head was seen to be burnt. Then the king and the others who had been present at this spectacle threw themselves in crowds at the blessed man's feet. They tearfully sought forgiveness and they demanded, with the most pressing supplication, to be baptised.

This highly typological and allegorical story comprises a network of symbols.

The test is after the order of Old Testament heathen sacrifices: "**et aedificaverunt excelsa Baal** [the Lord said to Jeremiah], **quae sunt in Valle Benennom, ut initiarent filios suos et filias suas Moloch; quod non mandavi eis ... ut facerent abominationem hanc.**"[19] "**Contaminavit quoque Topheth, quod est in Convalle Benennom, ut nemo consecraret filium suum aut filiam per ignem Moloch.**"[18] "**Vos fornicamini ... cum traducitis filios vestros per ignem, vos polluimini in omnibus idolis vestris ...**"[20] As in the case of the vision of St. Apollinaris[21], the priestly vestments represent Christ, Whom Bruno has by his **conversatio**, after the Pauline expression, "put on". Christ Himself is highest priest and ultimate sacrifice. The priest at the mass is a

kind of living icon of Him, Whose sacrifice has saved all who believe in Him from the power of hell and death. Bruno thus enters the fire as the representative of the crucified Christ victorious over those connected evils, death and false gods.

The holy water and holy incense stand in opposition to another abomination, perpetrated six verses earlier in **Jeremiah** and in an earlier chapter: **"sacrificabant Baal et libabant diis alienis libamina ad irritandum me**[22] **incensum offerre Baal et ire post deos alienos"**[23]. As in the case of St. Apollinaris again, the good incense represents the prayers of the saints, Bruno completely circles the fire of destruction with this. The holy water has a chain of typological connections: the water that flowed from the side of Christ crucified, the wine of the Eucharist, the drink offering submitted with the Old Testament sacrificial lamb (itself a type of Christ), the water of the Red Sea through which escape is made from bondage in Egypt, the water of baptism ...

In coming through the fire as he does, Bruno is after the order of Shadroch, Meshach and Abednego, cast into the fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar because they would not worship his false gods and golden image: **"nihil potestatis habuisset ignis in corporibus eorum, et capillus capitis eorum non esset adustus ..."**[24] Christ had been in the furnace with them: **"Ecce ... viros quattuor solutos et ambulantes in medio ignis, et nihil corruptionis in eis est, et species quarti similis filio deorum."**[25] In Bruno's case, he himself in his vestments is like the Son of God. It is victory of this kind that Christ promised the Pharisees and the Sadducees as the sign of His own questioned **virtus**:

> **tentantes ... rogaverunt eum, ut signum de caelo ostenderet eis. At ille respondens ait eis ... "Generatio mala et adultera signum quaerit, et signum non dabitur ei nisi signum Ionae** [Resurrection from hell].[26]

Participation by Christians in this signal victory is prophesied most clearly in the **Psalms** and **Isaiah**:

> **Noli timere, quia redemi te et vocavi te nomine tuo; meus es tu ... cum ambulaveris in igne, non combureris, et flamma non ardebit in te.**[27]
>
> **Quoniam probasti nos, Deus; igne nos examinasti ... transivimus per ignem et aquam, et eduxisti nos in refrigerium.**[28]

(xvi) He baptises the converts.

> And so there began to stream together to baptism so great a multitude of pagans that the sainted man proceeded to a certain wide lake and in that abundance of water baptised the whole people.

The pagans themselves pass through the water of baptism, by which they are buried with Christ and gathered into the same **virtus** of life with Him.

(xvii) The king leaves the royal household to live with him.

> Now the king determined that he would relinquish the kingdom to his son and, for as long as he himself might live, would never part from Boniface in any way. Furthermore, the king's brother, who lived together with him, was killed by the king himself, in Boniface's absence, because he would not believe.

The same point is developed a little further through the use of household imagery that is probably a vague allusion to two Gospel images:

> **Nolite arbitrari quia venerim** [Jesus] **mittere pacem in terram; non veni pacem mittere sed gladium. Veni enim separare hominem adversus patrem suum** [etc.] ... et inimici hominis domestici eius.[29] Quae est mater mea [Jesus's], **et qui sunt fratres mei? ... Quicumque enim fecerit voluntatem Patris mei ... ipse**

meus frater [etc.] **... est.**[30]

The conversion that the Russian king makes, renouncing everything (a fuller conversion than the Emperor Otto's), violently transfers him from one royal household to another. He who persists in the old life is as though left for dead. The above-cited saying of Christ about the division of brothers ends with the famous paradox:

> **Qui invenerit animam suam, perdet illam; et qui perdiderit animam suam propter me, inveniet eam.**[31]

The negative side of this applies to the royal brother. Damian will now turn to its positive effect on Bruno himself and those whose welfare his martyrdom serves:

(xviii) He is martyred.

> And another brother, who was now separated from living with the king, was inflamed to a very great anger against him because of his brother's conversion. As soon as the venerable man came to him, he refused to listen to his words [but] immediately took him [captive]. Then, afraid that if he kept him alive the king might rescue him from his hands, he ordered that he be beheaded, in his own presence [and] with no small multitude of men standing round [him]. And he himself was at once struck blind [while] such a stupor also fell upon him, with all [the others] who were present, that they were able neither to speak nor to perform any human function in any way, but all kept still as though rigid, immobile stones. Now when the king heard this, he was thoroughly grief-stricken, and considered every way not only to kill his brother but also to slaughter with swords all who had been accessories in this so great crime. But when he had come straight there and he saw his brother, together with the other men, standing insensible and cataleptically still[32], and the martyr's body still in [their] midst, he made this agreement with all his own [men who had come with him]: that, first, prayer should be made for them, if perhaps divine mercy might restore in them the sense they had lost; then, if they would acquiesce in believing, they would live, their crime forgiven; if not, however, all would die by the swords of revenge. When, therefore, prayer had been made for a long time by both the king himself and the other Christians, not only was their previous sense returned to the men who had been stupefied, but in addition there was added the sagacity[33] to ask [to be] truly well.[34] For at once they tearfully sought repentance for their crime, received the sacraments of baptism with great eagerness, and built a church over the most blessed martyr's body.

Once again life comes out of death, and once again through provocation. In the two verses of **Isaiah** that follow the promise "**cum ambulaveris in igne, non combureris**", the Lord promises further to Israel, "**dedi propitiationem tuam Aegyptum ... et dabo homines pro te et populos pro anima tua.**"[35] In **Exodus**, Moses and the Israelites have sung of the Egyptians and their other enemies, "**in magnitudine brachii tui fiunt immobiles quasi lapis**".[36] Bruno's enemies, similarly, do not escape in impunity. And yet out of this destruction the Lord can bring the new creation of salvation. As St. John the Baptist informed those whom he called to repentance and baptism, "**potest Deus de lapidibus istis** [any stones] **suscitare Abrahae filios** [i.e. Israelites]."[37] And in the same passage of Isaiah the Lord continued with the promise to Israel:

> **ab oriente adducam semen tuum et ab occidente congregabo te** [etc.] **... Educ foras populum caecum, et oculos habentem ... omnes gentes congregentur simul et colligantur nationes ...**"[38]

So by provoking them to martyr him, Bruno provokes God's unwitting enemies to a crisis in which their own old selves die too with Christ in baptism and they are re-created and gathered into the Christian Israel. Thus Bruno's martyrdom operates after the order of Christ's own self-sacrifice.

It remains only for Damian to round off this **Life** in miniature and link it back to Romuald.

(xix) Damian excuses himself for not saying more.

> But if I were to attempt to tell of all the gifts of power[39] that can truthfully be told of this marvellous man, my tongue might perhaps prove deficient; the material would not.

(xx) He attributes Bruno's sanctity to Romuald.

> While, therefore, Boniface's virtue[40] requires a pen of its own, we should nonetheless take care to remember him here, in the highest degree, with Romuald's other disciples, so that we may show by praising them how great a man their glorious master was; as the eminence of his **proteges**[41] resounds in the ears of the faithful, it may be known from the school that he held, how exalted was their teacher.

Damian's sources

The material out of which this chapter has been composed seems to be mainly of three kinds: (a) unconnected snippets of information from Bruno's days in Italy; (b) some scanty details come back from beyond the Alps; (c) wide-ranging Biblical reminiscences (with one from the **Life** of St. Benedict). The matrix is provided by Damian's own surmise and editorialising.

Northern Italian monastic sources are probably responsible for the second, third, eighth, ninth and tenth sections, dealing with Bruno's relationship with Otto, previous education, archiepiscopal consecration, asceticism on the road to Rome, and chanting of double offices. All this would be known to various brethren in contact with Bruno. The eleventh section, in which he rides barefoot, may also come from such a source as it is reported to occur on the doorstep of northern Italy and could be a practice in which Bruno in fact engaged repeatedly; although it is possible that Damian has himself developed it as a hardship story out of some differently focused reminiscence of a problem with a horse because he clearly preferred saints not to ride horses at all.

The information that filtered through to Damian about the more important period of Bruno's life, in the Slav countries, was

apparently very slight. The greater part of what Damian has to say about this is dominated by Biblical imagery. In only four sections are there signs of hazy information from beyond the Alps: the thirteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth, in which Bruno is at first denied martyrdom, baptises in a lake, is joined in religion by the king and finally achieves martyrdom. In each case here, Damian has worked from no more than a bare fact. The reason for the stayed hands of Bruno's opponents, added to the fact of his long initial mission without martyrdom, is clearly Damian's own surmise. The manner in which the basic points of the king's conversion and of Bruno's martyrdom have both been embroidered under Biblical influence has been considered above. The fifteenth section, in which Bruno is tested by fire, is redolent of legend at first reading but in fact so thoroughly rooted in Biblical symbolism at every point that most of it may not predate Damian at all. The same may apply, through surmise, to the fourteenth section, in which the king takes Bruno for a money-grubber; it could be assumed that Bruno would appear at court as a representative of the pope who consecrated him as well as in the hermitage in his ascetic's rags and that this duality would amaze a pagan.

Except for the sixth section, in which Bruno rolls in prickle-bushes and which is taken (as Tabacco notes) directly from St. Gregory's record of St. Benedict,[42] surmise and editorialising probably account for the remainder of the chapter. Bruno's early arousal to desire for martyrdom by reflection of his name in religion (Boniface) in the fourth section, and his adherence in the fifth to the fasting norm earlier established by Romuald, could both be assumed. The first, seventh, twelfth and last sections, in which Bruno distinguishes

himself at Pereo, explains his predilection for rolling in prickles and begins to preach provocatively to the Slavs, and is said to owe his **virtus** to Romuald, are clearly editorial link passages to make both the narrative and the argument coherent. The nineteenth section, in which Damian announces that he could but will not say much more about Bruno's miracles, effectively reduces, despite the hint of numerous oral sources, to the same status.

Literal historicity

Although not uniformly inaccurate, Damian's record of St. Bruno is very weak historical evidence. Bruno did not spend most of his life in and around the Ravenna area and most of it was therefore beyond the real knowledge of Damian's sources. Nothing can be accepted from this chapter without corroborative evidence.

NOTES

1. This should be compared to c.37, where it is claimed that Romuald apparently wished to convert the whole world into a hermitage.
2. Ad captandos popularis aure rumores.
3. **Matthew** 6:5-6.
4. Cf. the prologue and Tabacco's note there, p.11 n.1.
5. Comitatus.
6. Pedester.
7. Incedebat; all three of these can be military terms, the image being of an expedition of infantry.
8. Liquamen; Damian apparently intends this as a synecdoche for tasty fare.
9. Herbarum radices; as with Venerius in c.24.
10. Pontifex.
11. C.35, VR p.75. In c.45, VR p.86, his counsel to an individual abbot is also called "predicatio".
12. Such ideas were by no means idiosyncratic. Although it is doubtful that Damian had any direct knowledge of Bruno's opinions in the matter, Leclercq points out that in Bruno's own account of John and Benedict's preaching "with view to martyrdom", the salutary effects on the preacher are considered much more than are the advantages to the listeners: **Romuald missionaire**, pp. 317-318. G. Miccoli, **Théologie de la vie monastique chez saint Pierre Damien (1007-1072)** (Paris, 1961), pp. 464-66 and 473-4.
13. What happens in this chapter thus appears to be an extreme

manifestation of his general principle, "melior vita procul dubio quam doctrina"; cf. Ep. 8, 1, PL144, 462. Cf. also c.52 n.1. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.74, points out that St. Gregory the Great promoted the traditional teaching "il faut que la personne du predicateur s'impose a l'estime afin que sa parole fructifie", but gives no reference for this.

14. Animus.
15. **Matthew** 11:7-10; also **Luke** 7:24-27.
16. Vis vera.
17. Cataste - in late antiquity some cataste had been iron grates on which Christians were burnt to death; cf. Niermeyer.
18. 4th **Kings** 23:10.
19. **Jeremiah** 32:35.
20. **Ezekiel** 20:31.
21. C.2.
22. **Jeremiah** 32:29.
23. **Jeremiah** 7:9.
24. **Daniel** 3:94.
25. **Daniel** 3:92.
26. **Matthew** 16:1-6.
27. **Isaiah** 43:1-2.
28. **Psalm** 65(66): 10-12.
29. **Matthew** 10:34-35.
30. **Matthew** 12:48-50; **Mark** 3:33-35.
31. **Matthew** 10:39.
32. Sine sensu et motu stupefactos astare.
33. Consilium.
34. Salus; both health and salvation.
35. **Isaiah** 43:3-4.
36. **Exodus** 15:16.
37. **Matthew** 3:10.
38. **Isaiah** 43:5-9.
39. Or "miracles"; virtutum dona.
40. Or "power"; virtus.
41. Clientes.
42. **Dialogues**, Book 2, c.2.

CHAPTER 28 JOHN AND BENEDICT FROM PEREO ARE MARTYRED IN POLAND

This second chapter about missionary disciples of Romuald may be divided into twelve historiographically: (i) the first sentence, in which "King" Boleslav asks Otto III for missionaries; (ii) the second to sixth sentences (to p.61 1.1), in which John and Benedict offer themselves; (iii) the remainder of the first paragraph, in which they seek papal permission and assistants from Pereo; (v) the first sentence of the second paragraph, in which Boleslav seeks a Roman crown; (vi) the second sentence of the second paragraph (to p.63 1.1), in which John and Benedict refuse to assist him in this; (vii) the third to sixth sentences of the second paragraph (to p.63 1.13), describing their martyrdom by thieves; (viii) the seventh to ninth sentences of the second paragraph (to p.64 1.5), in which the thieves are unable to burn the evidence; (ix) the tenth to twelfth sentences (to p.64 1.10), describing the confusion into which the murderers are thrown; (x) the last sentence of the second paragraph, in which the martyrs are glorified from Heaven; (xi) the third paragraph, except for the last sentence, suggesting the saving effects on the murderers and others; (xii) the final sentence, stating that miracles occurred at the martyrs' shrine.

Damian's argument

(i) "King" Boleslav seeks missionaries.

Damian introduces the new story of martyrdom in the north with another statement of the link to Otto, Pereo and a Romuald who was probably in fact scarcely involved:

> Meanwhile, while Romuald was living in Pereo, King Boleslav directed prayers to the emperor that he would send him spiritual men who might call the people of his kingdom to the faith.

(ii) John and Benedict volunteer.

> The emperor thereupon went to Romuald and pleaded that there be granted to him some monks of his who could be sent there usefully. Now [Romuald] did not want to order this to any of his [brethren] as though by the authority of prelacy, but reckoning on their devotion, gave them all the choice of staying or going. For he did not know the will of God in so awesome a matter and therefore committed it to the brethren's decision rather than his own. When the king accordingly asked and humbly begged them, only two out of them all were eventually found who offered themselves, of their own accord, ready to go. Of these, one was called John and the other Benedict.

In these sentences Damian both details a role for Romuald and, as in the case of Bruno in the previous chapter, authenticates the martyrdom in advance. Romuald's ignorance of God's will at this point does not represent a limitation to his sanctity (as in other circumstances it would) because of the peculiar nature of the matter. Martyrdom is the highest and hardest holy vocation and the saints who proceed to it do so more appropriately if **"in eorum voto"** - called directly by God, as here - than if in obedience to a spiritual father who will not be offering himself with them. As in the case of Bruno in the previous chapter, although in a different way, it is made clear that John and Benedict understand just what it is to which they are submitting themselves.

(iii) They learn the vernacular.

> And so these went to Boleslav and first began by staying in a hermitage, [Boleslav] supporting [them]; and so that they would afterwards be able to preach, they applied themselves to laboriously learning the Slavonic tongue.

Damian does not comment on it here but, as with Bruno in the previous chapter, martyrdom is not achieved immediately. In this case the

excuse, of which he will inform the reader next, is that learning the language took more than six years:

(iv) They send to Italy for permission and assistance.

> And in the seventh year, when they now knew the language of the land fully, they sent a monk to the city of Rome and sought through him a licence to preach from the bishop[1] of the highest see. They also charged this messenger to bring with him others of the blessed Romuald's brethren who, having been instructed in the eremitical conversation, might live together with them in the Slavic region.

(v) Boleslav asks them to bring him a crown.

> Now Boleslav wished to receive the crown of his kingdom by Roman authority, and began requesting the aforesaid venerable men, appealing strongly, that they would take his many gifts to the pope and bring him back a crown from the apostolic see.

This coronation ambition stands in significant contrast to the higher coronation of John and Benedict through Boleslav's agency which will shortly ensue.

(vi) They refuse him.

> They totally refused [their] assent to the royal petition, saying: "Our places are[2] in a holy order. It is not permitted to us to engage in secular affairs at all". And thus they left the king and returned to their cell.

Beyond presenting the pair as model, unworldly religious, these sentences serve further to authenticate the coming martyrdom; John and Benedict would not have been true martyrs had they died as custodians of royal property. This refusal to divide their loyalties also bolsters what may be considered a rather second-rate martyrdom with a suggestion of death in defence of Christian principle; when, it will turn out, they were in fact killed simply as witnesses to a crime and can be considered martyrs only in that their Christian

service had led them into the fatal circumstances.[3]

(vi) They are martyred by thieves.

> Certain men, however, who were aware of the king's counsel but did not know what the sainted men had replied, supposed that they had taken away with them to their little cell a bountiful weight of gold that was to be sent to the apostolic [the pope]. And so they arranged among themselves, concluding an agreement, that during the night they would secretly enter the hermitage and both kill the monks and make off with the money. As the blessed men sensed them trying to break in and immediately understood the reason for their coming[4], they began to make confession between themselves and to fortify themselves with the standard of the holy Cross [to cross themselves]. Now there were two boys there who had been assigned from the royal court into obedience to them. [These boys] planted themselves firmly to stand for the saints and resist the thieves with all their might. But the thieves, [because] their approach had in the event been discovered, forced their way in, swords drawn, and killed them all without distinction.

The coming of the thief in the night is an image used repeatedly in the New Testament of the second coming of Christ, which will be generally unexpected. The immediate awareness of John and Benedict of what is happening shows them to be vigilant Christians who have heeded the Biblical warning. Their unresisting death, shriven and marked with the Cross, is presented as martyrdom. Damian distinguishes them from the locals known to have died with them by recording the latters' nobly-intentioned but unsaintly resistance.[5]

(vii) Their cell will not be set alight.

> Then [the thieves] anxiously searched for the treasure, and when they had overturned everything and found nothing, they tried to set fire to the cell and burn away the very corpses of the martyrs so as to cover up [this] so very sinful crime and so that human supposition would ascribe what had been done not to weapons but rather to flames. But when the fire was put to [the cell], it lost its natural force. It could not consume anything at all, no matter how hard the men tried. For the very fabric of the walls repelled it as though instead of wood there were the hardest flints.

Thus is the work of John and Benedict tested in their cell - symbol of the contemplative heart - as Romuald's was at Pereo in Chapter 21. St. Paul had promised that what each man builds upon the foundation of Christ, whether "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble", will be revealed with fire.[6] The flinty character here is perhaps to be explained by reference to the rock out of which the fountain flowed for the Israelites in the desert. This flinty rock is typologically interpreted as Christ Himself[7] and the reference to flint here would indicate that upon the foundation of Christ John and Benedict have constructed their whole hearts of Christ.

In **Zechariah**, moreover, the flying scroll of malediction enters the house of every thief (and perjurer) and consumes it all, both wood and stone.[8] The destruction the thieves fail to inflict on what John and Benedict have edified is thus, ironically, what they are bringing upon themselves.

(ix) The thieves are thrown into confusion.

> And so the thwarted thieves endeavoured to find refuge in flight, but even this was by divine providence denied them. Indeed they were frightened all night as they sought a way through forest thickets, across wide pastures, through shadowy woods; but [as] their tracks wandered astray, they could not find this at all. Nor indeed could they put their daggers back into their sheaths, because their arms were withered up.

The way they cannot find probably again represents Christ, "the way, the truth and the life."[9] They are lost in desert places of the very kinds in which holy hermits rejoice in Him. It is clear from the description of their condition, resonant with Old Testament reminiscences[10], that they are lost in more ways than one.

(x) The martyrs are glorified.

> But where the bodies of the saints lay, profuse light shone and did not cease to grow brighter right through to day. The sweetest, most pleasant angelic song did not cease to resound.

This hagiographical commonplace not only indicates divine approval of the martyrs but also their function as bearers of light to the pagans in their darkness and harbingers of the glory of the returned Christ. For the light in the night anticipates the day of the Lord as described by Zechariah: **"in die illa ... erit dies una, quae nota est Domino, non dies neque nox; et in tempore vesperi erit lux."**[11] The day of judgment is further anticipated by the events that follow.

(xi) The coronation of the martyrs and liberation of the murderers.

> Now when day came, what had been done could not be concealed from the king. He hurried to the hermitage immediately with an innumerable multitude of the people, and so that the thieves would not escape, made a crown of men and encircled the whole forest all round. At length they were caught, manifestly guilty of the crime and bound, besides, to their own swords out of divine vengeance. Now the king deliberated what he should do about them, considering the matter well, and decided in the end that he would not order them to be killed as they deserved; not at all, but rather that he would fix them, bound in iron fetters, to the martyrs' sepulchres, so that they might either live miserably in chains until [their] death or, if the holy martyrs should see the matter differently, they themselves might free them in their own mercy. When they had been dragged, at the king's command, to the saints' tomb, they were at once released[12], their bonds broken, by the ineffable omnipotence of the divinity.

This highly symbolic passage argues the soteriological significance of the martyrdom. The events take place on a kind of day of judgment (introduced by the previous section), the king playing a Godlike role. The coronation of the martyrs with a crown of men indicates that their greatest glory is the people who will be saved because of them: **"Et salvabit eos Dominus Deus eorum in die illa"**, declared Zechariah of the sons of Zion, **"quia lapides coronae fulgebunt super terram eius."**[13] John and Benedict go one step further than Bruno in the

previous chapter. They have not even begun their preaching, but their martyrdom, this symbolism implies, has effected the salvation, the "calling to the faith ", of the multitude who live under the king, who had asked for them to do it.

The divine punishment that has been inflicted on the murderers - bondage to their own instruments of death - represents the wages of sin. **"Converte gladium tuum in locum suum,"** Jesus commanded the disciple who wished to defend Him. **"Omnes enim, qui acceperint gladium, gladio peribunt."**[14] The crime of these sinners is so heinous and so irreversible that they cannot put theirs back by their own strength, and they would indeed perish, bound to their swords in the woods, but for the intervention of the king and martyrs. In fact, even they are saved, their bondage to the tombs of the martyrs and liberation there returning to that major theme of the **Life**, sanctification through vicarious participation in holy death. Through the little Polish hermitage in the midst of unbelief, salvation is brought to a whole people.

(xii) Miracles take place at the shrine.

> A chapel [15] was thereafter built over the bodies of the saints, and countless are the prodigies effected there, not only then but even now, by divine power.

Damian's sources

The chapter divides roughly in two, the former section composed of a series of small pieces of information expanded and connected by surmise, and the latter section mainly from Biblical and traditional hagiographical imagery.

Boleslav's opening plea to Otto to send missionaries to convert his people while Romuald was at Pereo, is not supported by other evidence.[16] It may originate in surmise predating Damian, but it effectively introduces all the actors in the drama (except the murderers) and has probably been put together by Damian himself to that end.

The story of Romuald's reluctance to order anyone to go seems to have developed through lack of information being taken as evidence. In Bruno of Querfurt's account Romuald is simply not involved[17], but Damian's understanding of the master's leading role at Pereo and as spiritual adviser to the emperor could not have allowed for that, so he has evidently produced from his own knowledge of spiritual relationships a positive reason: ignorance of God's will in so awesome a business as martyrdom.[18]

The learning of the vernacular in the third section is a bare fact on which Damian apparently could not elaborate. Clearly the pair cannot have done only this for six years.[19]

The sending of the messenger to Rome and Pereo in the fourth section is of similar status. Damian evidently did not know that it was in fact Bruno of Querfurt, rather than the vague "brethren of Romuald" who was to be called to participate.[20]

The fifth section's record of Boleslav's desire for a Roman crown, to be negotiated by the missionaries bearing gifts to the pope, is derived from confused historical details. Boleslav, as Tabacco notes, was a duke whose kingdom was not created until after the events described by Damian were past[21], and the money given by him to Benedict was,

according to Bruno, for the journey to Italy. Noting that Bruno makes no reference to the political issue, Tabacco suggests that Damian does so, in spite of the confusion of facts. Throughout the **Life**, however, Damian shows very little sign of any real interest in, or understanding of, any political ramifications of the events he describes. It may well be that Boleslav is here presented as already a king, and more particularly a king seeking a crown of "apostolic" origin, to qualify him for the part of the representative of the divine King by Whose mercy sinners are liberated by the sainted martyrs in the "day-of-judgment" scene at the end of the chapter; and so that John and Benedict can die a principled death, refusing to participate in secular affairs, in the sixth section.

This more historical part of the chapter reaches its climax with the account of the martyrdom itself in the seventh section. Comparison with Bruno of Querfurt's very detailed account (for which he claims as witness one of the murderers) suggests that this, like the fourth section, is based in oral tradition only little embroidered (although greatly abbreviated). In Bruno's version, however, the whispering is only possibly confession, the sign of the Cross is not mentioned and there is no record of the two Slav brethren's resistance.[22] Damian or his source would have assumed these signs of saintly (or in the last case, heroic but unsaintly) death. At this point in the chapter Damian's source appears to be at its best; perhaps because the martyrdom itself was the focal point of interest to the monastic tellers of the tale.

The eighth section's marvel of the resistance of the building (a church in Bruno's account, rather than a cell) to fire, and the brief tenth section's glorification of the sainted corpses, were presumably

already appended to it, as they are in the alternative source (although Bruno's explanations are different). At this point, however, both Bruno's and Damian's accounts become less straightforwardly historical and more hagiographically adorned.

The Biblical sources of the imagery used in the ninth and eleventh sections, concerning the murders and the "king", have been indicated above. Virtually none of the information offered here is corroborated by Bruno. Although the stories probably originate in some kind of oral testimony, every detail of them as they stand contributes to the symbolic explanation of the **significance** of the martyrdom. In their present form these stories are perhaps very largely Damian's own work.

The final note about the chapel miracles is so brief that it is impossible to determine how much Damian knew about these; possibly no more than he tells, already appended by his source as a final proof of sanctity.

Damian's actual knowledge of these events would therefore seem to reduce to several, mainly slight, reminiscences linked to the story of the martyrdom. Considering John and Benedict's ties with Pereo and that their martyrdom had occurred in 1003, these details probably reached the Ravenna area very quickly after the event and were then told of repeatedly over the thirty-odd years until Damian heard them. Damian's ignorance of Bruno's relationship with John and Benedict (his own martyrdom in fact post-dating theirs) and very vague knowledge of their missionary activities - even exactly where they were in the "Slav parts" - suggest that his information did not come from anyone who had had close contact with the martyrs. The martyrdom story appears to be the fullest information Damian had of events outside

Italy. Otherwise, as in previous cases of Italians abroad, he knew almost nothing.

Literal historicity

This chapter offers almost no evidence about Romuald. Even as Damian tells the story, Romuald was really scarcely involved in the evangelisation of the Slavs.[23] As for John and Benedict themselves, Damian's account appears to be roughly true, but much too remote and scanty[24] for any uncorroborated information to be accepted.

NOTES

1. Antistes.
2. Positi sumus.
3. Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**, p. 319, points out that John and Benedict never actually became missionaries and were killed, as they took their nightly sleep, not by pagans but by bad Christians. Cf. also Vfr. c.13, pp. 730-731.
4. Adventus.
5. Similarly Bruno, whose account of the events differs, insists that all four hermits were martyrs because they did not resist death, but that their servant, who was killed with them, was not a martyr because he did resist. Cf. Vfr. cc. 7-13, pp. 723-733, and Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**, p.319.
6. 1 **Corinthians** 3:11-15. Cf. Romuald's cell-fire at Pereo, c.21 above.
7. Cf. **Numbers** 20:7-11, **Deuteronomy** 8:15, **Psalm** 114 (113A):8, 1st**Corinthians** 10:4; expounded by Damian, **Sermo** 48, PL144, BD.
8. **Zechariah** 5:1-4.
9. **John** 14:6.
10. Cf., e.g., **Job** 12:24-25, 24:13-14 and 38:15, **Daniel** 11:6, and **Zechariah** 11:17.
11. **Zechariah** 14:6-7.
12. Absoluti, with connotations of absolution.
13. **Zechariah** 9:16.
14. **Matthew** 26:52.
15. Basilica, in the sense of sepulchral chapel.
16. Cf. Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**, pp. 313-16. As Tabacco points out, VR p.61 n.4, Bruno, who was present, records the idea as Otto's own, without reference to Boleslav or Romuald; Vfr. c.2 p.719. The building of the coenobium in Poland was also Otto's idea. Meysztowicz, pp. 40-43, accepts Damian's evidence without question and blends it with Bruno's.
17. According to Bruno, it was he himself who persuaded Benedict to go to Poland in pursuit of Otto's plans. Cf. Meysztowicz, pp. 41-2, & Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**, p.316.
18. It has been argued that Damian is here concealing active opposition to the missions on Romuald's part. Cf. n.23 below.

19. The period was perhaps in fact more like two years. Cf. VR p.61 n.4 and p.62 n.4
20. Cf. Franke, pp. 16-17, and Tabacco, VR p.62 n.5.
21. VR p.63 n.1. On Boleslav's elevation, cf. also Labande, op.cit., pp. 464-66.
22. On the contrary, one tried to flee. The servant, however, did try to defend himself; Vfr. c.13 pp. 731-32.
23. Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**, pp. 307-323, argues that, far from promoting missions to the pagans, he opposed the involvement of Pereo, which was not conceived originally as a mission school, because he saw it as a threat to his own work; cf. especially pp. 314-15 and 322-23. Leclercq credits much of his argument to R. Wenskus, **Studien zur historisch - politischer Gedankenwelt Bruno von Querfurt** (Munster - Cologne, 1956). He emphasises Wenskus's argument (p.135 n.290) that Damian distorts the facts in the VR and that "l'opposition de Romuald au plan missionaire est encore visible dans la Vita Romualdi elle-même." Cf. n.18 above.
24. He does not, for example, appear to know the identities of the murdered Slavs. As Tabacco notes (VR p.63 n.3), Bruno (c.13) records the names of the two Slav hermits as Isaac and Matthew, together with a servant, Christian. Meysztowicz, p.30 and n.9 pp. 52-55, notes that these names and events are recorded also by Cosma of Prague (died 1125) in his **Chronica Boemorum**, Book 1, c.38, which, Meysztowicz argues, is independent of both Damian and Bruno.

CHAPTER 29 JOHN AND BENEDICT'S MESSENGER IS IMPRISONED BUT FREED BY AN ANGEL

This short chapter divides neatly into two; (i) the first two sentences (to p.65 1.5), in which the messenger to Rome is captured; (ii) the other two sentences, in which he is celestially released.

Damian's argument

(i) Henry II seizes the martyrs' messenger.

> Now the Emperor Henry was not unaware of Boleslav's counsel, and ordered the roads to be guarded everywhere; if Boleslav should send messengers to Rome, they would fall at once into his hands. And so the monk who had lately been sent by the sainted martyrs was eventually seized and thereupon confined in prison custody.

Thus Damian establishes a parallel between the thieves' persecution of the martyrs and the emperor's of their messenger. For although the modern reader is likely to draw the inference that Henry wished to prevent Boleslav from obtaining a Roman crown, Damian does not in fact state what Henry's purpose was; it remains open that he, **"Busclavi consilium non ignorans"**, like the thieves, **"regis agnoscentes consilium"**, was greedy for the royal treasure; his motivation is not the issue,[1] but simply what he does to the messenger. John and Benedict's martyrdom has brought liberation to persecutors who were bringing bondage to sin and death upon themselves. Now liberation is to be extended to their own monkish messenger, who is also liable to fall into bondage, even when travelling (literally to Rome; allegorically on the Christian pilgrimage to Heaven through the dangers of earthly life?) under the saints' own instructions and in their own service. Heaven intervenes at once:

(ii) An angel of the Lord frees him.

> But in the night an angel of the Lord visited him in prison and informed [him] that those whose embassy he was undertaking had been killed. At once the prison was divinely opened and the angel announced that he would find a ferry-boat prepared for him in the river that he was about to cross. Hurrying there, the monk proved that the angel who had made the promise was true to his word.[2]

Whereas the murderers have had to wait for the coming day before being released from their bondage, the martyrs' servant is set free already while it is still night. This probably means that his salvation is already secured in the present age.[3] The boat that awaits him is the vehicle of grace[4] that carries him over the river of death - the same river in which the rebellious brother of Bagno (Chapter 18) has perished. Thus the martyrdom of his masters works good for the imprisoned monk too. It does not cause him to turn and go back where he has come, but launches him, upon the instant he receives the news of it, to resume and expedite his halted journey.

Damian's sources

Like the previous chapter, this one divides into a former half based on a fragment of historical knowledge and a latter half based on Biblical imagery. In this case it is true that war between Henry II and Boleslav interrupted communications between the missionaries and Rome[5], but there is no other evidence of quite such an imprisonment. The release from prison in the night time is vaguely reminiscent of the release of Peter in the **Acts of the Apostles** 12:1-11, with the addition of the ubiquitous water and boat imagery. It is not at all clear from what source the story Damian heard had reached the Ravenna area, but if it began as a garbled account of the impediments suffered by Benedict in Prague because of the war[6], which the first section,

taken alone, could be, it must have already been interpreted under the Scriptural influence before Damian heard it; the latter section could not be added by mere deduction.

Literal historicity

Damian shows no sign of knowing anything about what was really going on in the distant lands of the Slavs beyond the fact that the emperor and Boleslav were at loggerheads.

NOTES

1. Meysztowicz, op.cit., pp. 63-4 n.63 (4), comments that, unlike Bruno, Damian "parle de la raison de la discorde entre Boleslas I et Henri II". Damian in fact, however, does not quite do so.
2. Angelice promissionis fidem veram esse.
3. Cf. c.33, where there is another boat in the night.
4. Cf. the boat of c.4.
5. On the causes of this war, cf. Meysztowicz, p.50.
6. Cf. Vfr. c.11 p.728, and more generally cc. 10-13.

CHAPTER 30 A MONASTERY IS CONSTRUCTED TO HONOUR ST. ADALBERT, AND ROMUALD PROPHESIES OTTO III's DEATH

The highly symbolic accounts of the saving effects, however indirect, of Romuald's eremitism at Pereo are followed by this more literal but historiographically ramshackle chapter apparently designed to explain his removal from that hermitage and link the preceding and following sections of the narrative, which deal with quite different concerns, coherently together. It can be conveniently divided into five historiographically; (i) the first sentence, in which Otto builds a monastery at Pereo at Romuald's urging; (ii) the second to fourth sentences (to p.66 1.7), in which the abbot of the new house ignores Romuald's counsel to live mainly in a hermitage; (iii) the fifth and sixth sentences (to p.66 1.13), in which Otto refuses to take the habit until he has subdued Rome; (iv) the penultimate sentence (to p.66 1.17), in which Romuald warns him of death and moves to Parenzo; (v) the last sentence, in which the emperor dies.

Damian's argument

(i) St. Adalbert's monastery is built at Romuald's suggestion.

> Now while Romuald was still staying in Pereo, the Emperor Otto, at his suggestion, built a monastery there in honour of St. Adalbert, to which he joined the contiguous estates of the community[1] of Classe. He compensated it for them out of royal property[2] in the area of the march of Fermo.

This is the first of the various coenobitic foundations whose origins are to be associated with Romuald. Damian presents it as in fact a joint good work of Romuald and Otto, perhaps as further proof of the emperor's good intentions towards monasticism before his distressing death, still unconverted, later in the chapter.

(ii) The rebellious abbot will not live eremitically as Romuald instructs him.

> An abbot was accordingly appointed there from among Romuald's disciples, and brethren were gathered. Romuald began to keep them under strong guard and taught them to live under regular discipline. He also ordered the abbot to withdraw into the hermitage and dwell there for the whole week; on Sundays, however, to come to the monastery and visit the brethren. The abbot scorned the sainted man's orders and began to live in a worldly manner; and the foot of his work having once begun to slip from the way of rectitude, it then began to deviate further.

From Chapter 45 of this **Life** and from other work of Damian's, it is evident that all the abbot's secularity amounts to is residence in the **coenobium**;[3] when the **coenobium** is a subordinate foundation of a hermitage, the abbot must conduct himself ermitically. Damian, however, does not develop any argument about the matter here. His main concerns in this chapter are the emperor and Romuald's departure for Istria, so he is satisfied merely to introduce Romuald's doctrine of abbacy.

(iii) Otto resists conversion.

> When, therefore, Romuald saw that it was not possible for him to labour there in keeping with the ardour of his will, he went immediately to the king and as the collector of a credit pledge[4] began to insist vehemently that the king become a monk. The king asserted that indeed he was about to do what was demanded[5]; if, however, he might first attack Rome, which was rebelling against him, and, when she had been conquered, return to Ravenna with victory.

The logical connection between Romuald's inability to control St. Adalbert's and his decision that now is the time to insist on the emperor's conversion is forced. Damian has probably juxtaposed these partly because Otto did in fact die at about the same time as Romuald left Pereo and partly because he sees a similarity in the rebellions: the emperor's refusal to withdraw to the monastery is like the abbot's

refusal to withdraw to the hermitage. Romuald can see the fatal consequences of refusal to pay the debt that is due.

(iv) Romuald prophesies Otto's death and embarks for Parenzo.

> Romuald said to him: "If you go to Rome you will not see Ravenna again." And most clearly warning that death was coming to him, because he could not call him back, and undoubtedly certain about the king's ruin as he hurried to Rome, Romuald embarked on a ship and crossed the sea to the city of Parenzo.

Thus Romuald is finally excused for his failure to effect the imperial conversion; clearly the fault is entirely Otto's. The two journeys are significantly juxtaposed. For it is not recorded simply that Romuald **went** to Parenzo but specified that he crossed the water by ship, similar to the imagery of the messenger monk's liberation in the previous chapter (and of Romuald's journeys to Marinus's hermitage in Chapter 4 and with Orseolo from Venice in Chapter 5). Why such salvation imagery is employed here is not quite as clear, but Romuald is apparently liberating himself from the worldliness into which Pereo has declined. Otto, by contrast, hastens to the rebellious worldly city to try to tame it by direct action. This is not the eremitical way. The holy man has left the world for an anticipatory Heaven into which he draws others away to safety with him. Otto will not come along.

As well as explaining the emperor's untimely death, this section prepares for the next theme of the **Life**. The group of chapters dealing with the eremitical **conversatio** and missionary work is now complete; next comes Romuald the unheeded prophet to monks.

(v) Otto dies.

> And so the king, in accordance with the blessed man's prophecy, was only just beginning to return from Rome when he was immediately taken ill and died at Paterno.

Damian's sources

All sections of this chapter appear to be based in oral records, although of disparate origins and historical status.

The first section's record of Otto's foundation of the new monastery with Sant 'Apollinare lands and the compensation with imperial property is most likely to have come to Damian directly or indirectly from an informant at Sant 'Apollinare itself. Romuald's initiation of the foundation, it will be suggested below, is probably embroidery, presumably Damian's own.

The story of Romuald's difficulty with the obstinately coenobitic abbot, on the other hand, is much more vaguely based in Romuald's perduring spiritual teaching. It is known also from Bruno of Querfurt, who was present, that Romuald was not happy about the choice of abbot (he wanted Benedict of Benevento, who refused and instead became the martyr to the pagans already described in Chapter 29) but there is no corroboration of the claim that refusal to live eremitically was the cause of the problem.[6] There is no sign in this section that Damian knew any more than that there was an abbot and Romuald disapproved of him. The rest he could surmise from his general knowledge of Romuald, so the form and function of the story he heard are lost from view.[7]

The third section, in which Otto delays his conversion to go to Rome, belongs to the series of reminiscences concerning the conversion

promise.[8] Bruno also suggests that Otto delayed his conversion because of Rome but his version of the conversion promise had allowed three years before it was required to be fulfilled, within which time the young emperor was in fact already dead.[9] Romuald's vehement conversion demand at this particular time, however, is unsupported by other evidence[10] and is probably Damian's own deduction to involve and at the same time finally excuse Romuald.

The prophecy of death in the fourth section, in the form in which it there appears, is well integrated with the delayed-conversion story, but it would have been capable of independent circulation in memory of either Romuald or Otto. The great event of an emperor's untimely death is something that a holy man from whom he took counsel would be assumed, inside and outside the monasteries, to have foreseen.[11] Romuald's crossing to Pereo, which Damian has integrated with the prophecy, needs no other source than the fact that he was there, which will form the subject of the next chapter.

The brief record of the imperial death at Paterno is a simple historical detail which would have been widely known.

Literal historicity

It is probably not true that Romuald left for Parenzo because of disputes with an abbot.[12] Bruno of Querfurt explains the move as a flight from too many visitors to Pereo - a common enough problem for hermits in the period[13] - and also the desire to make new converts.[14] It is questionable whether Romuald suggested the new foundation[15], insisted at this point on Otto's conversion or prophesied his death. Damian's interpretation of events, that is to say, is questionable,

but the outline of events themselves is probably sound.

NOTES

1. Coenobium.
2. Phiscali possessione.
3. Cf. VR p.66 n.2 Also Tabacco, **Romualdo**, p.85.
4. Accepte promissionis exactor. The image is of debt-collection, although "promissio" can also mean a monastic vow.
5. Exigebatur; "demanded" again in the sense of payment owing.
6. Cf. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, pp. 86-87, and Vfr. c.2 p.719.
7. Tabacco, ibid., argues that Damian's record at this point shows that he had good sources for Pereo. It is questionable, however, whether his knowledge was either extensive or profound.
8. Cf. c.25; also c.22.
9. Cf. VR p.54 n.1, referring to Vfr. c.2 p.719. Meysztowicz considers this conversion dispute, pp. 37-39. His argument that Damian's and Bruno's accounts are completely concordant is pushed too far.
10. According to Bruno, on the contrary, Romuald replied to Otto's promise of conversion after three years: "In hac voluntate permaneas, o rex, et, si incerta vita hominis hoc tempus non dabit tibi, tu tamen ante oculos eius factum habes qui scit quae ventura sunt et qui exterius opera iudicat interius secundum hominum corda." Vfr c.2 p.719. Both Damian's and Bruno's accounts read as though they (and perhaps monastic observers generally) were embarrassed or confused by God's cutting short of the sympathetic Otto's span so very young and looked, in the one case, to explain it, and in the other, to explain it away.
11. Cf. Meysztowicz, n.45 pp. 61-62. Meysztowicz argues that there is a similarity between Romuald's prophecy and one Bruno attributes to Benedict the martyr (Vfr. c.5 p.723), which Meysztowicz considers to be a lapsus calami, "car il s'agit de toute évidence de S. Romuald." He also sees the prophecy in Romuald's response to Otto as recorded by Bruno; cf. n. 10 above. Another story was recorded by St. Odilo, in which Otto's death was predicted, although in a spirit of foreboding rather than of prophecy, by the old Empress Adelaide before the young monarch left Germany; cf. Labande, op.cit., p.463. Odilo had himself prophesied the deaths of Otto I and Otto II; cf. Heath, op.cit., p.56.
12. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, p.98, is probably correct, however, in arguing that Romuald's attempt to institutionalise eremitism at Pereo in a relationship of hegemony to other monks and to potentates ended in failure, and that the problems over the selection of an abbot did not help.
13. Derek Baker gives some French and English examples in "'The Surest Road to Heaven': Ascetic Spiritualities in English Post-Conquest Religious Life", in **Studies in Church History**, vol. 10, **Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and The World** (1978), pp. 49-50.
14. Cf. Vfr. c.2 p.719 and Tabacco, **Romualdo**, pp. 92 and 97-98.
15. Otto appears to have been impressed by Adalbert from the time of their first meeting in 983 and was personally and politically interested in the saint's missionary work and deeply affected by his martyrdom. He preserved his memory in a series of churches, beginning at Aachen, Cf. Labande, op.cit., pp. 298, 309-11, 312, 458, 463-4, 466 and 472.

CHAPTER 31 ROMUALD IS GRANTED UNDERSTANDING AND TEARS AT PARENZO

In contrast to its predecessor, this chapter is predominantly a development of themes already ancient in the tradition of spiritual writings. It may be divided historiographically into five: (i) the first sentence (to p.67 l.5), detailing where Romuald lived; (ii) the second to eighth sentences (to p.68 l.14), in which the prophecy and tears are granted; (iii) the ninth sentence (to p.68 l.16), in which the team restrain him from celebrating mass before large congregations; (iv) the tenth sentence (to p.68 l.20), in which he counsels against excessive tears; (v) the last sentence, in which he is strictly enclosed.

Damian's argument

Damian puts down virtually all his knowledge of the Parenzo period in the first sentence:

(i) Romuald founds a monastery but retires to an enclosed life.

> Now Romuald lived for three years in the district of the city of Parenzo, in one [of which] he built a monastery, but for [the other] two remained enclosed.

Once again the coenobitic founder is shown to remain himself unswervingly committed to eremitism. Again too, no reason is suggested for the foundation, but the context suggests it is an overflow of his own perfection.

(ii) He is granted the gifts of tears and the penetration of mysteries.

> And divine beneficence[1] there carried him on to the pinnacle of such great perfection that, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he both foresaw no small number of events that were to come and penetrated with the rays of [spiritual] understanding[2] many [of the] deep mysteries[3] of the Old Testament and the New. And on a certain occasion he there [tried to] worry himself [into] breaking into tears, but by no effort [of his own] could he come to the compunction of a contrite heart.[4] It came to pass, however, on a certain day, as chanted in his little cell, that he happened upon this verse of the psalm: "I will give thee understanding[5] and instruct thee in this way in which you should go; I will strengthen mine eyes upon thee".[6] And then so great an effusion of tears sprang from him and his mind [was] so illumined to understand the meaning of divine Scripture that from that very day onwards, as long as he lived and whensoever he wished, copious tears would flow from him most easily and most [of the] mystical secrets[7] of the Scriptures no [longer] lay hid from him. For contemplation of the divinity frequently [took] him [in] such rapture that [it was] as though [he had] wholly dissolved into tears [and], surging with the unwavering ardour of divine love, he would cry out, "Dear, dear Jesus, my sweet honey, unutterable desire, sweetness of the saints, delight of the angels" and other things of this kind. Such things [as] those he uttered in [his]song of joy, [which was] composed by the Holy Spirit, we cannot express in human terms. For as the apostle [Paul] says, "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself prays for us with unwavering sighs."[8]

Thus Damian brings together in a highly concentrated passage several of the major concepts of ascetic-mystical theology: prophecy, the spiritual understanding of Scripture, the gift of tears, compunction, contemplation, **amor**, rapture, prayer in the Spirit ... Each of these had been dealt with at length by numerous New Testament and patristic authorities, and Damian himself was to expatiate on various of them in his later works.[9] Here he prefers to show them in their inter-relatedness rather than develop an argument about any one of them. The complex is introduced by the prophecy of the emperor's death at the end of the previous chapter, which is continued by the dual ability to foretell events and understand the enigmas of Scriptures that is claimed for Romuald at the beginning of this section. The following **theosis**, or virtual deification, in which the mystic is rapt out of himself in experiencing the divinity that has transformed him, had been the goal of Christian ascetics throughout their history.

The basic mystical point underlying the section is assumed rather than stated by Damian: all good is one because all good things come from one God. God is Truth; Truth is revealed in God as Christ (Who has declared Himself to be the Truth[10]); Scripture, inspired by God, preserves His revelation, prefigured in sacred history; God, through His own grace, can be lived with by men in close relationship, the experience of the first men to do so also being preserved in Scripture; the more closely men do live with Him and the more fully they grow to love Him, the better they may understand what He has caused to be written about Himself and His grace to men; the fuller this understanding, the greater the desire to live for Him only, to become fully reconciled to Him and to experience Him before all else; the closer life is lived with Him, the better able the saved man will be to explain God to other men and lead them also into the relationship with Him that is the **sancta conversatio** - as Romuald will do in the next two chapters.[11] Contemplation is a life of holy **affectus** under grace.

The full extent of Romuald's holy **affectus** is revealed in the following sentence:

(iii) He cannot contain his tears at mass.

> And therefore Romuald would never celebrate mass before very many, because he could not restrain himself from floods of tears.

In this way he participates most fully in the mass. The tears are a passion and a sacrifice offered alongside those of Christ Himself.

(iv) Romuald counsels against excessive tears.

> On this account also, [as he was] a man of simple heart[12] by habituation already very great [and as] he thought the grace [that had been] granted had been divinely conferred on him for everyone, he used afterwards to say commonly to [his] disciples, "Beware that you do not shed many tears, because they both impair the sight and wound the head."

Weeping on someone else's behalf is recorded in a famous passage of **Jeremiah:**

> **Haec dicit Dominus: "Vox in Rama audita est lamentationis, luctus et fletus Rachel plorantis filios suos ..." Haec dicit Dominus: "Quiescat vox tua a ploratu, et oculi tui a lacrimis, quia est merces operi tuo ... et revertentur de terra inimici."[13]**

Rachel had stood from patristic times as symbol of contemplation.[14] She signifies also the Church.[15] She is the mother of the children of Israel, type of Christians, who are to be brought back from the Babylonian captivity to the enemies of God, symbol of captivity to evil. Romuald, who has just been granted the perfection of contemplation, weeps for her children too and tells his disciples that it is not necessary for them to weep likewise for themselves. His tears, he believes, are efficacious for them vicariously - as is the sacrifice of the mass. The grace that accomplishes his perfection flows on through him to those for whom he is responsible, and although he cannot celebrate the mass before a gathering of the many, he celebrates it more effectively on their behalf than if he could - another point in the eremitical-ascetic argument.

The reason Romuald himself apparently ignores the counsel to refrain from weeping is probably that he understood the two verses of **Jeremiah** as cause and effect; Rachel (rightly) weeps for her children, and this is the "work" rewarded by the great joy of the salvation of the children. Thus Romuald's tears also lead to cries of jubilation.

Impairment of sight by weeping is found in several Old Testament texts.[16] As vision and contemplation are intimately related, Romuald is probably warning that the tears that have accompanied his own contemplation (and that of numerous earlier saints) may obstruct it for others. The explanation for this is probably to be found in his own inability to fabricate tears before they were granted, and his earlier warning (in chapter 9) that falsified religious sentiment is valueless. Having introduced the issue to develop a point in his theory of eremitism, Damian must, as previously with fasting, distinguish the **virtuoso** from the pupil because of the pastoral problems that would result if religious missed the point and attempted beyond the bounds of discretion to imitate such a model literally and daily by working themselves into hysterical states. It is probably true that they would not attain the beatific vision this way.

Wounding of the head, also taken from the Old Testament[17], is symbolic of the crushing by God of the power of His enemies, including Leviathan. The association between tears and the crushing of heads is probably therefore connected with the typology of the holy waters through which the power of evil is broken. The meaning behind this part of the warning is perhaps that those who fabricate weeping beyond their degree of holiness (Romuald has received this gift only at the moment he has received also perfection), will bring down the destructive might upon their own sinful heads (as Paul had warned that those who take the Eucharist in the wrong spirit eat and drink damnation upon themselves.[18]).

(v) He encloses himself.

> And wherever the sainted man decided to live, he first made an oratory with an altar inside a little cell, then shut himself up

[and] damned approach.

Although this is to be taken literally, the cell as always stands representative of the contemplative heart. With an oratory for prayer and an altar for the Eucharist, Romuald entirely seals himself off from others in a contemplative life which the reader now knows will be mystically efficacious for others, even as they are forbidden, for whom he will there be praying, sacrificing and weeping.

Damian's sources

The brief first, third and fifth sections appear to be derived from oral records. Only the first, however, in which Romuald both founds a monastery and lives eremitically while by Parenzo, is directly connected with the period in question. The tears during mass belong to no particular period, and indeed there is no reason to believe that a hermit would refuse to celebrate mass before large congregations **only** because of his tears. Damian has probably assimilated a more general reminiscence here.[19] Similarly, the enclosure in a cell with oratory and altar belongs to no particular period.

As he has put it directly into Romuald's mouth, the fourth section's counsel to avoid excessive tears has probably also come to Damian from an oral source, but the introductory explanation why Romuald thought this way is probably Damian's own.

The second section, concerning the grant of perfection and constituting the bulk of the chapter, is composed entirely of themes already ancient in the tradition of spiritual writing. It shows no sign of oral transmission. Certainly, however, Damian was not the first to believe Romuald to have been perfect.

Literal historicity

As with other journeys Romuald made outside the Ravenna region, Damian shows little sign of really knowing much at all about what Romuald did at Parenzo. There is no reason to doubt, however, even if the particular stories are questionable, that the quality of the spiritual life attributed to him is authentic.

NOTES

1. Pietas.
2. Intelligentia; spiritual, more than normal, insight.
3. Occulta mysteria.
4. Cor.
5. Intellectum.
6. **Psalm** 31(32):8.
7. Mistica.
8. **Romans** 8:26.
9. To tears there are many references. Cf. especially Op.15, **De suae congregationis ordo**, PL145, 358B-360B, ("Quomodo lacrymarum gratia possit acquiri" and Op.13, **De perfectione monachorum**, PL145, 307D-309D ("De laude lacrymarum").
10. **John** 14:6.
11. Leclercq, **Otia monastica**, op.cit., pp.78-79, considers the tradition that regarded studying the word of God and explaining it to others as one of the most appropriate functions of the contemplative life.
12. Animus.
13. **Jeremiah** 31:15-16.
14. Cf. Damian's Op.13, PL145, 303D.15.
15. Cf. Op.35, **De picturis principum apostolorum**, PL145, 590C-591A.
16. E.g. **Psalms** 6:7 and 30(31):9, and **Lamentations** 2:11.
17. Cf. **Psalms** 67(68):22,73(74):13-14 and 109(110):6, and **Habakuk** 3:13-14.
18. 1st **Corinthians** 11:29.
19. Cf. chapter 50 section (ii).

CHAPTER 32 HE PROPHESIES

Only one main point is made in this shorter and simpler chapter: that Romuald was a prophet. It falls, however, historiographically into three: (i) the first sentence (to p.69 1.4), in which Biforco sends brethren for advice; (ii) the second to fourth sentences (to p.70 1.4), in which Romuald foresees their coming; (iii) the last sentence, in which he advises them.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald is consulted by brethren of Biforco.

> At a certain time, the brethren who were staying in the solitude that is called Biforco sent to him [to] ask [him for his] counsel [as to] how they should conduct [themselves] in the hermitage [and] how they might be able to resist the assaults of the devil.

Thus the scene is set. The brethren come for the inspired teaching, the revelation of the divine will, that is an aspect of prophecy.

(ii) He foretells their coming.

> When their messengers arrived at the monastery, from which Romuald's cell was a long way off, the venerable man immediately knew in the Spirit of their coming, and ordered Abbot Anso, who was then assisting him, "Go and prepare [some] cooked food for the brethren who have come from far away." [Anso] at once began to deride him and to say that he was in truth a false prophet. [When], however, he subsequently came to the monastery, as he [was] forced [to], he found those whom the sainted man had predicted [he would], already praying in the church.

In the relationship which Romuald now has with the Holy Spirit, he is granted a heightened awareness that is effective in more ways than one. The foretelling aspect of prophecy, although in such a case as this somewhat trivial in itself, can be verified quite objectively.

It can therefore be used to authenticate a teacher whose more important prophecies, concerning God's will for men's lives, may be less easy to verify.

(iii) He instructs them.

> Romuald seasoned them with a great deal of the salt of salutary doctrine, instructed [them] also in the virtues' many weapons against the wiles of the ancient enemy, and after he [had] taught them acutely about all [matters], sent them back with great enthusiasm to [their] hermitage.

Damian's sources

The chapter has been constructed around the central section, where Romuald foresees the arrival of the brethren from a distance and is proven right. This typical hagiographical story would certainly have been capable of oral transmission and there is no reason to believe that Damian has substantially altered it.

That the brethren concerned were from Biforco and were seeking counsel however, shows no necessary connection with it. That Biforco sent to Romuald while he was at Parenzo is repeated immediately in the introduction to the next chapter, but the connection between that hermitage and the main points of both these chapters is in fact quite tenuous and may have been assumed by Damian because sojourn at Biforco (to be described in chapter 34) was the next item on the list of details known to him.

The short final section, recording the instruction, is very vague and is probably editorial; the brethren could not have gone away disappointed.

Literal historicity

It is beyond doubt that Romuald was seen to have special insight and that instruction in religion was sought from him and given. This had indeed been one of the common functions of such hermits since St. Antony (although the circumstances may rather vary[1]).

NOTES

1. Cf. **Vita Antonii** c.14.

CHAPTER 33 ROMUALD'S PRAYER SAVES SAILORS IN A STORM

Five historiographical divisions may be made in this longer chapter: (i) the first three sentences (to p.70 l.16) in which Romuald decides to go to Biforco; (ii) the fourth and fifth (to p.70 l.22), in which the bishop of Parenzo attempts to keep him by that city; (iii) the remainder of the first paragraph, in which the bishop of Pola is asked to send a boat; (iv) the first four sentences of the second paragraph (to p.71 l.21), in which Romuald sees boats at a marvellous distance; (v) the remainder of the chapter, in which his prayers save the boat in which he is travelling and its oarsmen.

Damian's argument

(i) Biforco asks for further counsel and Romuald decides to go there.

> At yet another time the aforesaid brethren sent messengers to him again and sought counsel in the same matter with still greater solicitude. The venerable man said to him: "I shall now write a small book on attack by demons, which I shall give you when you return, or perhaps I shall come with you myself." When they heard this, they at once threw themselves, face down, to the ground, and begged, quite insistent in their entreaty, that he might deign to go with them. And on the second day he declared unhesitatingly that indeed he would go with them and ordered them to seek out a ship.

Thus a narrative reason is provided for the travelling that is to follow. The value of the saint's physical presence is expanded on in the following section:

(ii) The bishop of Parenzo tries to prevent his departure.

> When he heard this, the bishop of Parenzo was stricken with great grief. And when he found the monks running to and fro on account of the vessel, he abused them with a great many unjust insults.[1] Moreover, he published an edict to all who stayed by

> the harbour, that whosoever might presume to give ship to Romuald and himself leave together with him, would make his departure irreversible and would not come back to Parenzo again.

The value of the saint's physical presence is thus emphasised for the first time since his attempted murder in Chapter 13. Belief in the value of physical contact with the immanent holy, in persons or in material objects, had pervaded Christianity since Biblical times. It was fundamental to the veneration of relics, as most clearly indicated by the would-be murderers of Chapter 13, and as Romuald is not recorded as having done anything in particular for the bishop of Parenzo or his flock, it is to be taken as the simple reason for the bishop's indiscreet behaviour.

Damian, however, is not really interested in the bishop, who vanishes from the story as suddenly as he has appeared, or his motivations. In the following sections of the chapter a boat will be requested from another bishop and, when this fails to arrive, Romuald will make remarkable predictions about yet other boats coming to Parenzo to collect him. This section has therefore probably been included primarily for the sake of the narrative, to explain why the saint will not simply have taken a boat from the harbour.

(iii) A boat is sought from the bishop of Pola.

> A messenger was therefore hastily sent to the bishop of Pola [to ask him] to send the blessed man a vessel without delay. For the aforesaid bishop had often encouraged him not to lie hidden any longer, enclosed in so obscure a retreat - not at all - but rather to transfer himself there, where he would have been able to make profits in souls more richly; plainly so that he would not, like embers, glow for himself alone, but truly pour out the rays of his light on all who are in God's house, like a lamp placed on a candlestick.

Damian refrains from saying that it was Romuald himself who sent to

the bishop. Clearly he has previously ignored this bishop's interpretation of Christ's image of the Christian as a shining light - an interpretation which would entice him from his accustomed reclusion - and in the events which will unfold in the remainder of the chapter he will be proven right.

(iv) Romuald foresees the arrival of other boats.

> Then, while the messenger who had been sent was being waited for, Romuald said to those brethren who were with him: "You should know beyond doubt that that brother will come late, and we must go in another ship before he returns." And when the holy day of the Lord [Sunday] came, in the very twilight of dawn, he said to a certain brother who was assisting him, named Engelbert (who was afterwards appointed archbishop to the pagans): "Look way out to sea and you will see two ships, still a long way out, making towards us at equal speed. One of them definitely ought to take us." The man looked very hard and extended his eyes' rays to survey everything carefully, but was altogether unable to see any sign of rowing. But as the day grew brighter, moment by moment, lo, he saw with his very longest sight two ships afar off coming closer and appearing, because of the still very great distance, as if they were so many birds.

The usual meaning of **dies dominicus** is simply Sunday, but in this section of the chapter and what follows it is to be understood also in its association with the **dies Domini** of the Scriptures, the Day of the Lord which is both a day of wrath, darkness and disaster, and a day - for the faithful and God-fearing - of deliverance and salvation, the beginning of a new age.[2] Romuald is prophetically aware that the bishop of Pola will not be able to do anything for him on this day and looks instead for the help that is sent by Providence and that indeed arrives on the scene at the very dawn of the day of need, the dawn of the new age.

His special percipience in this begins already to provide an answer to the challenge implicit in the bishop of Pola's counsel. For Damian

uses the ancient idea of sight illumined by rays sent out from the eyes to show the way in which Romuald was already giving light to others: **"Lucerna corporis est oculus. Si ergo fuerit oculus tuus simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit**[3] ... ; in **Luke** this verse immediately follows that about the lamp, on which the bishop has based his advice. It is Romuald's function to be an eye for others, a seer, a prophet who can tell others of what they cannot see for themselves.

(v) Romuald's boat is saved in a storm.

> When they at last came into the harbour and the oarsmen were asked whether they would accept Romuald aboard their ship, they were immediately filled with a new joy. They put themselves and everything they had in his control and professed that they would be [rendered] blessed by the weight of so precious a pearl. They did not want to go that day, however, because they dreaded the threatening air. Now Romuald urged them to begin the journey at once, in hope of divine grace, promising them that they would suffer no danger at all, but they delayed there the whole day and began to sail at night.
>
> About dawn, winds suddenly raged, a tempest arose and the sea was churned over from its very bed. And then furious storms flew from all around upon those oarsmen, shaking the ship from one side and the other and loosening almost all the planks. And you should have seen the fellows, some actually stripping themselves to swim, and others tying themselves to various of the ship's implements, some even holding oars or other pieces of rigid wood so as to be able to swim on top of the waves. And when in this emergency, so great [as it was], there was no longer any doubt among them all, in their despair, that shipwreck was imminent, Romuald at that very moment resorted to [his] customary equipment[4] - namely, that of prayer. He pulled the covering on his head back a little; with his head bowed to his bosom, he poured out prayers in silence to the Lord. Then he ordered Abbot Anso, who was sitting close at hand, "Announce to the sailors that they should not be at all afraid but should all know, without any doubt whatever, that they will come through unharmed." Scarcely a moment after this and lo, beyond the hope of them all, the ship steered itself without any human effort. It immediately turned up in the port of the city of Caorle, borne [there] swiftly. Then all of them returned thanks, as deserved, to God the Liberator, and professed that they had manifestly been snatched from the jaws of death by the merits of Romuald.

Thus Damian makes his own application of the ancient symbols of the boat at sea in a storm, to which he later returned in some of his

other works.[5] It is highly allegorised. The pearl of great price, which in **Matthew 13:45** is the kingdom of Heaven, has here become Romuald himself because it is as associates in his salvation that his new companions will enter Heaven and will become, like him, **beati** - blessed;[6] participating, indeed, in his own beatitude. Their fear of the air is mentioned partly for the sake of the narrative - they are aware that the storm is coming - and partly perhaps because of the ancient belief that the air was the dwelling-place of demons - they are wise enough to recognise that they are living in a day of evil. They do not, however, have Romuald's Scripturally based, prophetic insight that this evil cannot harm them if they put their hope in God, Who is already victorious over sea and air and demons, so they bring danger upon themselves by delaying entry upon their journey with Romuald; the journey, perhaps, of the religious life which they must take to reach the safe harbour of contemplation and salvation.[7]

Of the many ship-and-tempest stories to be found in earlier literature the most important for the interpretation of the present passage seems to be the one in the first chapter of **Jonah**, interpreted typologically (with Jonah's following three days in the belly of the fish) since New Testament times as prophetic of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.[8] The ship stands for the Church or religious community and as so often in Christian literature those in it are Christians making the dangerous journey through life or through judgment to salvation.[9] In Jonah's case it was necessary for him to be thrown into the sea to calm it, which had been traditionally interpreted as a type of Christ's sacrifice. Romuald does not need to repeat this part of the story and instead offers prayer, the traditional confessors' sacrifice.[10] The ship is then suddenly taken, as though automatically, to land, as when Jesus had walked on the water to board

the disciples' boat on the Sea of Galilee, according to the version of that story recorded by St. John.[11] Thus Romuald once again stands in the place of Christ as he takes on the **aliene salutis cura.**

The bishop of Pola's misleading counsel is fully answered. Romuald's merits bring to salvation lesser Christians who would otherwise be overwhelmed by the forces of evil. He is not required to renounce his withdrawal to bring this about. He is simultaneously with these people and apart from them. At the moment they need him most desperately he falls into the silent and inactive prayer that is the supreme work of the hermitage and thereby are his merits rendered potent for them. It is not necessary for him to engage in any activity among them except this prayer, and even the resulting prophecy of their salvation is announced to them by someone else - by his assistant abbot. When they receive this prophecy their journey is complete. Their pointless struggles for self-salvation - a perennial temptation inside and outside the monastic institutions - are ended by the revelation that God's mercy, operative through the Christlike saint, assures their salvation, and in the safe harbour (of contemplation?[12]) they devote their energies instead to joyful praise. No saint could participate more fully in Christ to the advantage of his fellow men.[13]

Damian's sources

As in so many chapters, the sections here appear to have quite disparate origins.

Biforco's sending for counsel in the first section is clearly related to that of the previous chapter and indeed may be a repetition of the

same reminiscence. It was probably part of a coherent story of Romuald's relationship with Biforco (with which Damian will deal a little more fully in the next chapter, and to which he will refer again, briefly, in Chapter 64) that Damian has himself broken up for his own purposes. It certainly shows no sign of any necessary connection with the rest of this chapter. In spite of this oral background to the section, Romuald's decision to go to Biforco rather than write may have been suggested (either to Damian or to an earlier carrier of the story) by such a passage as **2nd John 13-14: "Multa habui scribere tibi, sed nolui per atramentum et calamum scribere tibi; spero autem protinus te videre, et os ad os loquemur."**[14]

The story of the indiscreet distress of the bishop of Parenzo is probably also a fragment of a larger reminiscence. Although no other information about the bishop is given in the **Life**, Romuald clearly had a relationship with him more important than Damian knew or cared to describe. If the story is read separately from the rest of the chapter, it seems to be primarily an early high evaluation of Romuald, an authoritative authentication of his sanctity, so it is possible that a larger version of it circulated in veneration of the saint without further allusion to the bishop and came to Damian already in that form. In any case Damian has probably himself pruned away any details not involving shipping and reduced the story to the few lines he gives.

In the third section, recording the unsound counsel of the bishop of Pola and the request for a ship from him, the fragment of oral reminiscence has become so slight that it has almost disappeared, serving only to introduce a misinterpretation of Christ's own words in the **Sermon on the Mount** for the rest of the chapter to answer. The

belief that hermits hide their light under a bushel has always been common and there is no reason to believe that Damian had any interest in this bishop except as a convenient mouthpiece to introduce the error. In fact the bishop's counsel, even as Damian records it, contains two elements: that Romuald should moderate or emerge from his reclusion and that he should do so by going to Pola to become, in an unspecified manner, a spiritual leader there: **"nequaquam de cetero in tam obscuro recessu inclusus lateret, sed illuc se potius conferret ubi animarum lucrum copiosius facere potuisset."** For the rest of the chapter, however, the invitation to Pola is ignored; the bishop is evidently expected to help Romuald escape Parenzo so that he can go instead to Biforco. So little survives that it would be idle to try to reconstruct the original form of the story, but this suggests that it was some kind of invitation story, whether including competition with Parenzo or not, which Damian has almost deliberately confused to introduce his own point. If the connection with Parenzo was not part of the original story, then Damian has deduced it by conflating fragments of information about the northern and southern sees of Istria.

In the story of the extended sight by which Romuald sees the ships afar off at dawn, Damian has produced an elaborated version of yet another reminiscence. Although he has filled it with symbolism and implicit allusion to Scripture, he reinforces its claim to historicity by naming the subsequent Archbishop Engelbert as witness. If the opening prediction to the brethren about the lateness of the bishop of Pola's boat is omitted, what remains shows no necessary connection with either Istria or Biforco but could have circulated, in a not very different form, as an independent story of Romuald the prophet.

The last, longest and most important section of the chapter, the tempest story, is composed, as suggested above, virtually entirely of symbols already venerable in Christian literature, except for the two names Anso and Caorle. As for these, Damian has already established in the previous chapter that Abbot Anso acted as assistant to Romuald at Parenzo and Caorle may have indeed been the port Romuald used for Istria. With these names omitted, the story is very literary in character. It argues a point that was clearly very important to Damian and is probably effectively his own composition, even if he was inspired by an oral story about Romuald in a storm.

Literal historicity

This leaves only a few disjointed snippets of information from Romuald's historical life: he was consulted by Biforco, which is already known; he was known to the bishops of Parenzo and Pola, although how well is not at all clear; and he was possibly remembered for remarkable clarity of vision.

NOTES

1. Multis contumeliarum eos dehonestavit iniuriis.
2. On the traditional association of the **dies dominicus** with the day of Christ's Resurrection, cf. Leclercq, **Otia monastica**, op.cit., p.53.
3. **Matthew** 6:22, **Luke** 11:34.
4. Armamenta; ship's tackle, utensils, rigging.
5. E.g., Op.12., **De contemptu saeculi**; PL145, 252C-253A; Op.20, **Apologeticum ob dimissum episcopatum**, PL145, 455B; Ep.1, 15, PL144, 229BC.
6. Elsewhere Damian has apostles as pearls; PL145, 904D. Cf. also **Proverbs** 25:12.
7. Cf. Op.11, **Liber qui dicitur Dominus vobiscum**, PL145, 249A, where the hermitage is addressed thus: "Te portum tranquillitatis inveniunt, qui naufragium mundani fluctus evadunt."
8. Cf. **Luke** 11:29-32 and **Matthew** 12:40. In **Luke** the allusion to the Jonah story immediately precedes the saying about the light placed where all may see it.
9. Cf. cc. 4, 5, 29 and 30.
10. Cf. c.2.

11. **John** 6:21.
12. Cf. n.7 above.
13. There is a similar argument for eremitical apartness, using similar imagery in a rather different way, in Damian's later Op.12 (**De contemptu saeculi**), PL145, 280C: "Sic nimirum, sic plerumque contingit, ut qui propria non contentus, alienae progreditur saluti consulere, sui potius cogatur periculum sustinere; cumque alii, velut inter procellosa naufragia palpitanti, manum porrigit, ipsum quoque praecipitem vorax fluctus involvit. Tutius ergo est sub huius vitae nocturna caligine, nos in littore positos naufragantibus lumen ingerere, quam ad eos compassionis gratia cum propriae vitae periculo pernatare; quatenus ipsi per nos dato recti cursus indicio, sinum tuti portus attingant, non autem nos ad eos transfretantes vorago spumosi maris absorbeat."
14. Cf. also 2nd **Corinthians** 3-4.

CHAPTER 34 HE ATTEMPTS TO REFORM BIFORCO

This chapter of three Latin sentences may be divided into three historiographical units of one sentence each: (i) the first, in which Romuald will stay only in the cell of his disciple Peter; (ii) the second, in which his nightly Psalter is graced by tears; (iii) the last, in which his attempts to constitute Biforco on a more regular footing are rejected.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald will stay only with his disciple Peter.

> So Romuald came to Biforco. And when he had seen all the brethren's cells, he would not take hospitality in any of them, except only in the one in which dwelt his venerable disciple Peter, because they seemed ostentatious to him [and] somewhat luxurious.[1] Now [Peter was] a man of marvellous abstinence and thoroughly great extremity who, following the example of St. Hilarion, allowed there to be made for him only a small cell, scarcely at all larger than four cubits.

Romuald has just saved a boatload of mere sailors by associating them into his own holiness; they who were in the same boat with him were saved by his merits. The missionary hermitage of Pereo has been created in Chapter 26 by the gathering of new "converts" from the world into his own habitation and **conversatio.** The apparent arrogance of the saint in the present passage, disdaining to take hospitality from any but the best of hermits (although Christ had taken it from sinners and tax-collectors), is to be explained by the standard use of the cell as symbol of the contemplative heart; he who dwells in another man's cell becomes an associate in that man's spirituality.[2] It is not appropriate for Romuald to be assimilated to the inferior holiness of the brethren of Biforco, whom he has come to help save, so Damian finds it necessary to prove that the disciple

Peter, who has not previously appeared in the **Life** and will not appear again, was an equal of even antiquity's St. Hilarion, a fitting cell-host for Romuald. Clearly, there is no repetition of the abbot of Pereo's error in Chapter 30. From this pure heart of the community, Romuald will bestow as much grace upon the brethren as they will receive:

(ii) Tears interrupt his Psalter.

> Now this same venerable man used afterwards to tell how the blessed Romuald, while he was staying with him, would alternate psalms between the pair of them, [each] substituting verses [for the other]; and three times a night, or more than that, Romuald would pretend to go [to attend] to the requirements of nature, whereas in fact he could not contain a streaming flood of tears and sobbing.

In Chapter 31, the reader has already learnt that Romuald believed his tears at Parenzo were effective for everyone. Thus the reader can know that here at Biforco too he works good works for the brethren, even as he refuses to live with them.

In Chapter 31 again, his tears have been associated with the prophecy that is inspired teaching and the salvation of those in the same boat with him has taken place at a moment of prophecy. Biforco, however, will reject his teaching:

(iii) Biforco rejects his reforms.

> Romuald remained there for some time and admonished the brethren not only about spiritual combat but also in fact that they should set an abbot over them and make everything communal; but they did not care very much to accept Romuald's precepts because each of them had his own supporter[3] and followed his own free choice just as he pleased.

Although Damian does not introduce the term, the brethren of Biforco

are thus shown to be sarabaites, an unacceptable class of religious. As St. Benedict had written of them:

> **Tertium vero monachorum taeterrimum genus est sarabaitarum... Qui bini aut terni aut certe singuli pastore, non dominicis sed suis inclusi ovilibus, pro lege eis est desideriorum voluntas, cum quidquid putaverint vel elegerint, hoc dicunt sanctum, et quad noluerint, hoc putant non licere.**[4]

Benedict did not include the keeping of private property in his definition, but John Cassian had earlier done so and both apply to the brethren of Biforco. Lacking the virtues of both obedience and poverty, they retain a self-centred self-sufficiency that inhibits their being gathered as a corporate body into the sanctity Romuald has brought to them. They may be likened to the sailors of the previous chapter who have attempted to save themselves by their own exertions while clinging to fragments of the disintegrating boat. These brethren will not be "all in the same boat" with Romuald, and his sojourn among them, as Damian states at the beginning of the next chapter, is therefore sterile.

It is possible that Damian has included this unedifying little memorial of failure here to dispose of another possible misapprehension about eremitism. He has already demonstrated that eremitism is not to be compromised by coenobitism, through Romuald's unsuccessful abbacy in Chapters 22 and 23; that it is not to be confused with or deemed inferior to anchoritism, through his magisterial relationship to St. Venerius in Chapter 24; and that in truth it is between the two, communal in single cells, as at Pereo in Chapter 26. Pereo, however, has been portrayed as a foundation of Romuald's own, where great severity of asceticism was maintained among the hermits directly by Romuald himself, the dubious abbot added in Chapter 30 being for the subordinate coenobium only. Because

Romuald's own juridical position in that model hermitage has not been defined, Damian has left open the possibility that a gathering such as these sarabaites of Biforco may qualify as a Romualdine group hermitage; but now, before Romuald's more complex foundation at Val di Castro is described in the next chapter, it becomes clear that it does not.

Damian's sources

The first of the three sections of this chapter, relating how Romuald would stay with Peter only, appears to have been worked up out of the single, orally-transmitted point that Romuald stayed at Biforco with that venerable man. That he refused to stay with anyone else is a highly loaded way of expressing the fact (as it presumably is) that he chose the cell of someone he already knew (and who conceivably was the source of Biforco's invitation to him). It is more likely that Biforco simply remembered, proudly and affectionately, uplifting stories of the illustrious guest of its own illustrious member, such as that told in the next section. It is Damian himself who finds it important to point out that the rest of Biforco was below par. The allusion to St. Hilarion is quite artificial. In Chapter 52 Damian will demonstrate in close detail how the community of Sitria imitated that early luminary, but here the only similarity is that they both kept small cells; the sizes detailed are not even the same. The introduction of Hilarion's name appears to serve simply as a quick measure of Peter's status.

The record of Romuald's tears in Peter's cell, although also useful to Damian and certainly no novelty in the **Life**, is much more likely to be authentic to the story he heard. Such a sign of sanctity is very

likely to have been of interest to a community who believed they had had a saint in their midst and the story as it is told shows no sign of manipulation to make a point it would not naturally make.

The last section has clearly been influenced by the ancient strictures against sarabaites, such vaguely constituted groups of religious - although not always with such multiple lay patrons - appear to have been quite common in Romuald's lifetime and indeed the earliest constitutional history of all the new communities of which Romuald is regarded as "founder" is very vague; perhaps itself the reason why Damian avoids the approbrious term "sarabaite" and uses language much milder than Benedict's or Cassian's.

It is very probable that Romuald's involvement with such groups as Biforco as here described caused Damian a certain embarrassment or difficulty of comprehension. By the time Romuald returns there in Chapter 64 an abbot will somehow have appeared from somewhere. If Damian knew that Romuald had had nothing to do with this development, he could well have preferred to assume that he had at least tried.

Literal historicity

Romuald seems to have maintained an extended relationship with Biforco, exercising an undefined supervision. Quite possibly he had been invited to go there, already noted for his **conversatio** and leaving an impression of his sanctity. There is no good reason to believe that he was very concerned about the community's constitution.[5]

NOTES

1. Superstitione quadam ambitiose.
2. Cf. cc. 22 and 58.
3. Sustentator.
4. **Ben. Reg.** c.1.
5. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, p.79 n.22, points to the significance of nobles supporting hermits individually, and compares the passage with c.37, where Romuald apparently encourages noble patronage of a hermit group; evidently Romuald's (or Damian's) only objection can be the individual nature of such patronage at Biforco.

CHAPTER 35 HE FOUNDS VAL DI CASTRO

Twelve historiographical divisions may be made here: (i) the first sentence (to p.74 1.3), in which Romuald seeks a more fruitful site than Biforco; (ii) the second and third sentences (to p.74 1.16), in which, on application, he is offered a selection in Camerino; (iii) the fourth and fifth sentences and the former half of the sixth (to p.74 1.11), describing his choice of Val di Castro; (iv) the latter half of the sixth sentence, with the seventh (to p.74 1.14), in which he takes up residence on land provided by a women's convent; (v) the eighth and ninth (to p.74 1.19), in which the soul-fruits he produces are described; (vi) the tenth and eleventh sentences (to p.75 1.5), describing his preaching and weeping; (vii) the twelfth sentence (to p.75 1.8), completing the first paragraph, where he weeps even while riding; (viii) the thirteenth sentence (to p.75 1.12), opening the second paragraph, in which he rebukes simoniacs; (ix) the fourteenth to sixteenth (to p.75 1.18), in which he proves their fault from the canons; (x) the seventeenth to nineteenth (to p.76 1.7), describing his endeavours to convert simoniacs to the religious life; (xi) the twentieth and twenty-first (to p.76 1.13), where Damian laments the obduracy of simoniacal bishops; (xii) the final sentence, noting that Romuald founded another women's convent there.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald seeks a better site.

> Romuald, therefore, unable to endure the sterility, began to inquire carefully, anxious in his desire, into where he might be able to find land fit to bring forth the fruits of souls.

Thus Damian introduces the new chapter with agricultural imagery,

applies it retrospectively to the previous chapter to link the two in contrast, and foreshadows the coming point that Val di Castro was a great success. He has said little or nothing about the natural characteristics of most of the hermitage sites Romuald has occupied and it is not likely that he means to imply now that Biforco was inadequate because it was naturally unsuitable.

(ii) He sends to Camerino in search of it.

> And so he sent messengers to the counts of the province of Camerino. When they heard the name of Romuald, they were filled with great joy and offered all the holdings under their authority[1], not only of forests and mountains but even, if he should so please, of fields.

The counts of Camerino are **repleti gaudio** just as the sailors at Parenzo were **repleti letitia.** Just as those sailors have put "**Se et sua omnia**"[2] into Romuald's power and have thereby been saved, so these beneficent noblemen offer all the estates that are definitive of their status and thus implicitly submit themselves likewise into his power. Although the term **virtus** that Damian uses for their lordship - "**cuncta sue virtutis offerunt predia**" - had a secular jargonal sense distinct from its religious meaning, Damian clearly wishes to associate the two, the worldly **virtus** being submitted to the spiritual.

In the process, the nature of the whole locality will be changed. In Chapter 1, according to the reading of several manuscripts, Romuald has entered religion to atone for the Cain-like sin of his noble father Sergius, committed over a meadow; and in any case, as noted there, Damian has elsewhere interpreted meadow and field as synonymous symbols of this world. Romuald will now bring this field back under the wholesome and bountiful spiritual **virtus** that prevailed before the Fall of Man. For although his description of Val di Castro is also to

be taken literally, it is dominated by traditional symbols that establish that the place is a Paradise:

(iii) He finds it at Val di Castro.

> At last a place suitable enough for the eremitical conversation was found on their estates[3], entrenched all round with mountains and forests. And in the middle there was a kind of plain, not only suited to bringing forth[4] fruits of the earth but also watered by clear spring waters. Now this place was called in ancient times **Vallis de Castro** [Fortress Valley].

Paradise restored in the celestial afterlife and in its anticipation which is Christian life on earth, is a theme dating back to the New Testament, and since antiquity monks had associated it particularly with their own **conversatio.**[5] Mountains, "whence cometh my help", were frequently interpreted as great men of religion.[6] Forests in the Old Testament were interpreted as the people of Israel[7] and in Christian times could symbolise the Christian people; in Chapter 45 Damian will explicitly use these same forests of Val di Castro as a symbol of the monastic community there (of which he by then disapproves). These mountains and forests entrench the spiritual stronghold of Fortress Valley. The plain therein, which will bear the spiritual fruits for which Romuald has sought it out as well as earthly fruits, is vivified by the spring waters which, as so often, are typologically connected with the water that flowed from the pierced side of Christ, the waters of baptism and all the other saving waters of Scripture.

(iv) He takes up residence there.

> There was already a small church there, in which there was found to be a convent of some convert women.[8] Now these withdrew from the place, small cells were built and the venerable man began to dwell there with his disciples.

Damian dismisses the coenobitic women, who might be thought to have prepared the ground already, with a minimal allusion. Romuald is not assimilating himself to **their** holiness. The site has been fit to bring forth fruits, but it does not actually do so until the hermitage has been established with Romuald at its centre:

(v) He brings forth the fruits of souls.

> And how many fruits of souls the Lord will have gained there through him, who would be able either to write down in ink or utter[9] by word of mouth? For people began to stream together to repentance from one direction and another, to distribute their possessions compassionately to the poor, some to abandon the world altogether and hurry, ardent in spirit, to the order of the holy conversation.

As the whole region is sanctified through Romuald, the souls that are brought to fruition are evidently not those of his hermit brethren only.

Having thus dealt first with the fruits, Damian turns to the means by which Romuald brought them forth:

(vi) He preaches and weeps like a seraph.

> For the most blessed man was like one of the seraphim, both because he himself burnt beyond compare with the flame of divine love and because he set others on fire, wherever he went, with the fire-brands of holy preaching. For often, as he was uttering forth[10] the words of some preaching, such great compunction would excite him to tears that he would all at once abandon the interrupted sermon and run away somewhere else on a sudden impulse, as though out of his mind.

The sudden change from agricultural imagery to that of flaming angel is probably to be explained by an indirect association through preaching. In Christ's famous "Parable of the Sower", it is successful preaching that brings forth good fruit: "**Qui vero in terra**

bona seminatus, hic est, qui audit verbum et intellegit, et fructum affert..."[11]

The seraphim, as Tabacco indicates [12], had been interpreted as fiery preachers and weepers since patristic times. Through a further association with the same Pauline text that has underlain Romuald's earlier insanity in Chapter 13, the preaching becomes not only fiery and lacrimose but also apparently mad: "**Unde dicit Apostolus ... Quia non agnovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes**".[13] Romuald's preaching is thus characterised by several traditions brought together in one short passage.

Val di Castro (here and in the next chapter) is in fact the only place in the **Life** where Romuald is presented as a preacher of sermons. In Chapter 45 his counsel to the abbot of Val di Castro that he should live eremitically will also be called **predicatio**, but otherwise throughout the **Life** preaching is a work explicitly associated only with Bruno, John and Benedict among the heathen of the North. In each case it is clear from the context that Damian is thinking of preaching only in terms of making conversions of life, whether from paganism to Christianity or among Christians to higher levels of **conversatio**. Romuald is never presented as preaching to increase only the knowledge, understanding or commitment of a congregation. So, as with Bruno's preaching, Damian shows no sign of knowing or caring about the **content** of these sermons of Romuald's and presents the preaching as an opportunity not to enlighten the people through their intellects but to communicate an emotion to them, namely the love of God. This is done dramatically, in such a way that they may see what it means in terms of compunction and the sacrifice, purification and escape from

worldly wisdom that it represents and effects. Thus Romuald's sermons are all the more effective for the fact that he is often unable to finish them.

Thus also can be seen what the result of his preaching will be. For the word Damian uses for Romuald's production of sermon words - **proferre** - is the same word he has used for the bringing forth of fruits of souls and fruits of the earth earlier in the chapter; the sermon words are the seeds that have already borne fruit in him and those who hear and understand him will be moved to become more like him. They who see Romuald in compunction see an angel of the highest order, one of those who stand immediately with God and proclaim His glory throughout the earth.[14] Holiness is before and among them. It is to this that they must assimilate themselves. That is the message not only of the sermon but indeed of the **Life** and such communities as Val di Castro are the ground whereon they may do so and where the fruit may go on being reproduced.

(vii) He weeps while riding.

> For even when he rode with the brethren he would come a long way behind the others, always chanting, and he would not cease to pour out perpetual tears; in no degree would they be less than if he were sitting in his little cell.

As Damian has already established the depth of Romuald's compunction in earlier chapters, this story of mounted weeping, which shows no sign of any necessary connection with Val di Castro, might well have been used elsewhere in the **Life**. It has probably been placed here, in juxtaposition with the preaching, to make the point that this preaching is eremitical not just incidentally, not just because Romuald happens to be a hermit, but by its very nature. The imagery

that has been used to characterise the preaching has come from a much wider tradition and does not in itself do this. But for Damian the peculiar, definitive characteristic of eremitism is the cell, the dwelling-place and symbol of the contemplative heart. So Romuald in this final sentence of the paragraph is shown as both a fellow traveller with the other brethren and a solitary, apart from them even though with them (as in the boat of Chapter 33), withdrawn perpetually in worshipful contemplation as though in his cell even when far removed from it. He is able to remain in the cell of his heart, and it is from the contemplation of God in which he is there engaged that the seraph-like preaching has sprung. The compunctive preaching that bears the good fruit comes as though directly from the hermit's cell.

Damian now turns from Romuald's preaching in general to his attempted reform of a particular group:

(viii) He reproves simoniacs.

> Now with the sternest gravity he especially rebuked, among others, secular clerks who had been ordained for money, and asserted that unless they voluntarily left that order they were quite damnable and heretical.

It was normal for simoniacs to be regarded in this way by the pre-Gregorian reformers of Damian's period.[15] What impressed him, however, was that he found Romuald to have been a pioneer of this reform:

(ix) He proves their guilt canonically.

> When they heard this, which was something new [to them], they plotted to kill him. For throughout that whole march, up to Romuald's times, scarcely anyone had known, because the practice was so common[16], that the heresy of simony was sinful. He said to them, "Bring me books of canons and prove by the testimony of

> your own pages whether the things I say are true." And so they carefully examined them, and they both acknowledged the crime and lamented their errors.

Romuald has first suffered a plot against his life at Sant 'Apollinare in Chapter 3. Since then he and his missionary disciples have suffered abuse or death every time they have attempted to reform or convert others, the danger increasing with the depravity of the sinners. In Chapter 3, Romuald has safeguarded himself by withdrawing into prayer in the closet of his heart, something that it has just been claimed he now effectively does constantly. Damian therefore now throws in this allusion without detailing how the murder was to be effected or what became of the intention, as a simple measure of the depth of the simoniacs' depravity and of Romuald's martyrdom **in voto** in taking them on. The intensity of their reaction reinforces his claim that they were surprised to find they were in a state of sin - in which case they are automatically proven to be deficient pastors - and saves him from having to describe them as generally depraved in conduct, which he may have known was not always true.

This is the only place in the **Life** where Damian, himself a well-known canonist, presents Romuald as having a knowledge of canon law. He has given no indication how or where Romuald may have acquired this knowledge, nor any hint that that contemplative previously concerned himself with such matters.[17] Having introduced it, Damian does not develop this new point about Romuald. It is presented in the context of his work to make conversions to better **conversationes**, and he returns immediately to that theme:

(x) He converts them to regular canons.

> And so the sainted man established many houses of canons and taught clerks who were abiding secularly in the manner of the laity to obey provosts and live communally in congregation. Not a few bishops too, who had usurped sacred sees by the heresy of simony, resorted to him for repentance' sake. They too comitted themselves to the venerable man and promised both to leave the episcopate after a fixed term and to make haste into the order of the holy conversation.

Clerks living like laity were not necessarily simoniacs. Although Damian is not specific, this allusion probably originates in concern about nicolaitism, the sin of priestly **de facto** marriage and simony's twin issue in his period.[18] If Romuald in his eremitical **conversatio** is to be shown as an agent by whom sinners of all classes are assimilated to Christ through conversion of **conversatio**, then the very important classes of secular clergy and bishops and the important **conversatio** of regular canonry cannot be omitted. Damian, however, is not really very interested in canons in the **Life** - they will not be mentioned again and even here not a single house is named - and he is forced to admit that Romuald's success with simoniacs was not as great as might have been wished:

(xi) Simoniacs resist conversion.

> I do not know, however, if the sainted man, for as long as he lived, was able to convert even one of these. For that poisonous heresy, especially in the episcopal order, is so hard and unyielding to converting that a Jew can be more easily converted to the faith than can a heretical thief, always postponing from day to day and so procrastinating into the future, be roused completely to repentance.

This may be taken partly as a cry of despair arising from Damian's own experience, partly as an excuse for introducing a point about Romuald for which he does not have adequate evidence. The significance of the characterisation of simoniacs as thieves becomes more apparent in the next chapter.[19]

The final sentence of the chapter is added without elaboration, almost as an afterthought:

(xii) He founds a female convent.

> In those same parts the sainted man also founded a monastery of nuns.[20]

Damian's sources

The first paragraph of the chapter - the first seven sections as it is divided here - is a mixture of oral record, Biblical imagery and linking surmise.

The first sentence, recording Romuald's disgust with sterile Biforco and search for more fertile ground, is clearly simply an editorial topic sentence.

Damian shows no sign of knowing the identity of any of the noblemen who offer their properties to Romuald in the second section, and in the end it is quite unclear just who gave Romuald what. There is no real donation story here. It is important to Damian to show their attitude to the saint and it seems likely that he has himself worked up this brief passage, although out of what reminiscence is not obvious.

The almost repetitive description of the site in the third section consists of the name of the valley and a few details about its general character selected because of their resonance in the larger tradition. It is based in a general knowledge of the site rather than an identifiable story.

The minimal allusion to the coenobitic women who were already there, constituting the fourth section, appears to be a fragmentary remnant of an indeterminate reminiscence. Because it tells of neither the background of this community nor what became of the women, and because, furthermore, it portrays the relationship between the community and the principal figure of the story as only quite incidental, it is not likely to have been transmitted in so truncated a form either as part of the memory of Val di Castro or as part of a story about Romuald's sojourn there; that is to say, Damian probably knew more than he wished to tell. The same applies to the brief foundation allusion which makes up the final sentence of the chapter, the last of the twelve sections, and which is probably more closely related to this fourth section than the **Life** would suggest. For if Damian knew that there were religious women at Val di Castro **before** Romuald, and he knew that there were religious women there **after** Romuald, these latter regarding him as their founder, then it seems likely that he knew some story about Romuald and women at Val di Castro. It has not made it into the **Life** but in these merest fragments. In the whole course of the work Damian does not elaborate in the slightest degree on Romuald's fruiting in nuns or in any way suggest praise for it. It must be suspected that it embarrassed him and was not an example he wished to promote among Romuald's followers. This will be considered further in relation to Chapter 63.

The fifth section, in which Damian cannot describe how many flocked to Romuald in devotion, is a generalising summary. There is no sign of any story peculiar to Val di Castro here.

The climax of the paragraph, the sixth section, where Romuald preaches, weeps and flees madly, as though a seraph, is composed

entirely of elements from the tradition of patristic exegesis, as indicated above, and again arises from a purely general knowledge of Romuald's spirituality.[21]

The seventh section, completing the paragraph by showing Romuald chanting and weeping even while riding, may be compared to the record of St. Bruno: ceaseless chanting as he walked ahead of the brethren accompanying him to Rome in Chapter 27,[22] which Damian has claimed to have received from a member of that party. Here it is the weeping rather than the chanting that makes the logical connection with the rest of the chapter, and an implication about the quality of this weeping which explains the story's inclusion at this point, but the chanting remains and, as in the earlier case, it is its ceaselessness that is emphasised. The story therefore probably originated as a commonplace record of the saint's marvellous and exemplary constancy of worship. Again there is no necessary connection with Val di Castro.

The four sections of the second paragraph, the simony paragraph, are based in a mixture of oral record, a reference to canon law unique in the **Life** and linking surmise.

The first sentence (the eighth section of the chapter), in which Romuald censures simoniacal clerks, is a second topic sentence. It purports to be a statement of Romuald's general stand on the issue, which Damian could have known only from oral sources, but no particular story is traceable in it.

The following section, the ninth, where it is shown how surprised the offenders were to learn of their error, does have the form of a story

that could have circulated orally. This may be the nucleus of the paragraph.

The record in the tenth section that Romuald endeavoured to reform simoniacal clerks and bishops to the religious life, appears to be of composite origin.[23] Damian does not really establish a logical connection between Romuald's foundation of canonries and the simony problem because, as mentioned above, the clerks **"qui laicorum more seculariter habitabant"** look more like nicolaitists than simoniacs, and even that former sin is not specified. Indeed, if the simoniacs are to resign their offices, there is no reason why they should become canons in particular and not monks, or even anchorites or hermits. The reminiscence on which Damian was drawing here may therefore have told no more than that Romuald advocated that secular priests form canonries as a general policy of defence against prevalent sins and as a form of assimilation to the monastic order.[24] The reference to the counselled conversion of the simoniacal bishops is left more open; the **sancta conversatio** which they are to enter is not specified. The story, however, is no more convincing for that. For not only does Damian refrain from naming any bishop or see, but the counsel given was later followed by Damian himself, far from simoniac though he was, when he resigned the cardinal bishopric of Ostia. If comparison is made also with Romuald's resignation from the abbacy of Sant' Appolinare, with his counsel to other abbots that they should live withdrawn in hermitages, with his counsel to Otto III to retire to monasticism (on which, as Bruno of Querfurt tells us, he placed a time schedule), and with Damian's much-quoted statement, two chapters below, that Romuald was thought to want to associate the whole world to the monastic order, then it appears that Romuald believed that the non-contemplative **conversatio** of every such office-bearer should be of

limited duration and that he would therefore have offered the same counsel to any bishop, simoniac or not.[25] In this case, the story originates in oral testimony to Romuald, but perhaps not with its present case.

As suggested above, behind the concluding sentences of the paragraph (the eleventh section of the chapter), lies Damian's own knowledge of simoniacs' intransigence in the face of conversion demands, and there is a hint that he really did not know much about Romuald's dealings with simoniacal bishops. These sentences probably convey his own feelings. The characterisation of simoniacs as thieves and heretics is traditional.[26]

Literal historicity

The information underlying the chapter may be divided into two, relating to Val di Castro and to Romuald's spirituality. What Damian has to say about Val di Castro, although too slight and too vague to be of very great historical value, appears to be broadly true.[27] The chapter is potentially more important as an historical source for the spirituality attributed to Romuald there, although in this respect it is also more questionable, focused as it is on his preaching. For although Romuald has been presented repeatedly as a notable weeper, this is the only place in the **Life** where he preaches to a congregation, the first occasion on which he has been seen to be demented since his highly symbolic escape from would-be assassins near Cuxa and the only time there is any reference to a knowledge of the canons.

An explanation is perhaps to be found in the nature of Val di Castro.

Pereo has been a model hermitage from which missionaries have been sent to preach conversion to pagans. Val di Castro is a hermitage which becomes the centre of conversion in an already-Christian region; a conversion on a different plane where basic believers and even heretical Christians are converted to the superior **conversationes** of various forms of the religious life. Romuald's work to this end is preaching both comparable to and different from Bruno's in the North. Because the whole region is blessed through him, it is left to be inferred that he preaches to whole congregations of laity but, as mentioned above, his counsel to a single abbot in Chapter 45 will also be called preaching and in the present chapter Damian in fact refrains from describing any multitude gathering to hear Romuald preach on a single occasion, as they evidently had Bruno in Chapter 27, or the ultimate model, Christ Himself. Romuald, however widespread his preaching may have been, was perhaps not really one of the great preachers of history.[28] As a leading hermit he evidently attracted numbers of converts to his hermitages and evidently concerned himself also with reforming too-secular religious and clergy.

The appearance of madness, as mentioned above, has probably been suggested by a passage about preaching in St. Paul. The original reference seems to have been to Romuald's religious weeping, which is not necessarily to be interpreted in this way.

What Romuald may have known of canon law is not at all clear. There is no other evidence that he knew anything at all.[29] It may be noted that, as Damian tells the story, Romuald does not quote from memory, nor, although he says, "Bring on the books of canons", does he find the right place or even read from them. He simply instructs the simoniacs to look through them. This leaves open the possibility that

Damian intended to convey no more than that Romuald knew simony to be forbidden, for which he would not have needed a personal familiarity with canon law.

It is equally unclear just how many simoniacs Romuald actually took it upon himself to correct. If, as suggested above, the conversion of secular clerks to regular canons was a more general policy than Damian makes it, and if he really knew little of Romuald's dealings with simoniacal bishops, then this story of his astonishing simoniacs with canon law may have arisen from only one occasion. The evidence offered is too slight to support Damian's claim of a special concern very convincingly. It will not appear again.

In sum, three major characteristics may be discerned in the picture of Romuald's spirituality that remains, none of them new to this chapter: his devotion was intense, constant, deeply emotional and profusely lacrimose; he did not flee from pastoral responsibility altogether but made arrangements for converts, or counselled established religious, before withdrawing again to solitude; and he understood the religious life to be the proper goal of all Christians and believed secular pastors should associate themselves with it while discharging their duties and subsequently embrace it fully.

NOTES

1. Sue virtutis praedia; cf. c.39 n.10.
2. C.33 section (v).
3. Possessio.
4. Proferendis.
5. Cf., eg., Bultot, op.cit., p.33, and Danielou, c.1 n.19 above.
6. St. Augustine, for example, explained: "Intelligimus montes, claros quoque et magnos Ecclesiae spirituales viros ... Per ipsos nobis Scriptura omnis dispensata est. Prophetae sunt, evangelistae sunt, doctores boni sunt; illuc levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium mihi." Cited by H. de Lubac, tr. L. O'Neill, **The Sources of Revelation** (New York, 1968),

p.157.

7. Cf. c.1 n.14.
8. I.e., adults.
9. Proferre; the same word used above for the bringing forth of fruits.
10. Proferret again; Romuald's own words come from the same divine source as the fruits of souls.
11. **Matthew** 13:23.
12. VR p.74 n.5. Cf., however, n.21 below.
13. **1st Corinthians** 1:21; Damian's **Sermo** 66, PL144, 884B-D.
14. Cf. **Isaiah** 6:2-3.
15. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, op.cit., pp. 67-69, summarises Damian's own activities against simony.
16. Vulgata consuetudine.
17. Cf. n.29 below.
18. Cf. R.H.C. Davis, **A History of Medieval Europe: From Constantine to St. Louis** (London, 1970), p.240. Also c.41 below.
19. Cf. also n.25 below.
20. Monasterium puellarum.
21. It may be noted that Tabacco's footnote comparison to two passages of St. Gregory the Great's (VR p.74 n.5) is misleading in two ways: firstly, because it might be taken as implying that Gregory originated this interpretation of the seraphim, when it was in fact already commonplace by his comparatively late date in antiquity, having arisen early in patristic times from the etymology of the word, meaning "fiery serpents" or "burning ones" (cf. P. Harvey, **The Oxford Companion to English Literature**, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1967)); and secondly, because it might be taken as implying that Damian at least had Gregory's passages in mind when he wrote, when the similarity of words is in fact slight and the understanding of the symbolism significantly different, in that Gregory presents the preaching as illuminating the eyes of the mind to open it to the supernal realities, separating this from the cleansing function of the tears, whereas in Damian's version the tears are themselves part of the preaching and contribute, with the preacher's associated appearance of being **out of** his mind, to its efficacity - in the one case the congregation see the holy through the preaching and in the other they see it in the person of the preacher.
22. And to the habit of St. Maieul of Cluny who read holy books as he rode; cf. Lawrence, p.80.
23. Tabacco refers the reader to Op.24, **Contra clericos regulares proprietarios**, PL145, 484 and to Op.27, **De communi vita canonicorum**, PL145, 503 ff. and Op.34, **De variis miraculosis narrationibus** PL145, 571ff.
24. Perhaps after the fashion of the decree of Louis the Pious and St. Benedict of Aniane that all cathedral canons should live a quasi-monastic life as regular rather than secular clergy. Cf. Davis, op.cit., p.156, and again Damian's own Op.27, PL145, 503C - 512C, **De communi vita canonicorum.**
25. It is, in any case, no more than a particular application of an ideal of bishops' retreating into spiritual interiority that can be traced to Gregory the Great. Cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, p.164.
26. Cf. J. Leclercq, "Simoniaca Heresis", in G.B. Borino, ed., **Studi Gregoriani per la storia di Gregorio VII e della Riforma Gregoriana**, vol. I (Rome, 1947), esp. pp. 524 & 525-527. Leclercq points out that Gregory the Great compared simoniacs to thieves in the Temple (**Hom. XVII in Evang.**, 13, PL76, 1145) and

that Damian, among others, regarded simony as the first and greatest heresy (op.30, praem., PL145, 523).

27. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, p.79, points out that this description of Val di Castro corresponds closely to Bishop Theodald of Arezzo's description of Camaldoli in his donation document of 1027.

28. The picture drawn certainly corresponds to the more mature Damian's description of himself as youthful preacher: "anxiabar... Ubi possem uberiores animarum fructus acquirere, et zelo proximorum ductus diversas Italiae regiones curioso mentis lumine perlustrabam". Ep.5, 12, PL144, 354BC.

29. Franke, pp. 118-19, cited this chapter of the VR as evidence that Romuald had studied the canons under Abbot Guarin at Cuxa. Although such study is possible, this is scarcely conclusive evidence. His only other cited evidence is c.41, in which the canons are not in fact mentioned. Ryan, op.cit., p.7, comments: "This incident illustrates the concern for the sacred canons on the part of Damian's predecessor, St. Romuald, in the ascetico-mystical Italian reform movement. Cf. A. Giabbani, "De Gratiano monacho camaldulensi", **Apollinaris, XXI** (1948), where this text is cited." Romuald's concern is indeed more "illustrated" than proven. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that Damian himself knew the canons; cf. Ryan, ibid., passim; also Cantin, op.cit., p.17. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, pp. 33-34, comments that the described use of libri canonum against simoniacs is the same as Damian's own.

CHAPTER 36 ROMUALD GENTLY REBUKES A THIEF

This shorter chapter has probably been developed from a single story and is most conveniently read whole:

> On a certain feast day, as the venerable man sat there [at Val di Castro] with the brethren in chapter and sated them on a banquet of salutary teaching, he suddenly broke off the very sermon, his attention worriedly distracted[1], and began to cry out. "Go!" he said, "Go with all possible haste, because he is already wrecking Brother Gregory's cell." (This Gregory was afterwards consecrated archbishop to the pagans.) They immediately leapt up and ran quickly to the cell, where they found a robber already breaking down the walls. Seizing him, they dragged him to the master and asked what was to be done with so sacrilegious a brigand. The sainted man began saying to them, cheerfully, "I do not know either, brothers, what we can do with so bad a person. Shall we tear out his eyes? But after that he will not see. Shall we cut off his hand? But then he will no longer work and perhaps, because of that, he will waste away with hunger. If we remove his foot, he will not be able to walk. But lead him inside and first lay food before him so that for the moment we may deliberate on what is to be done with him." And so the sainted man, rejoicing in the Lord, first had the thief fed and then rebuked him moderately, admonished him with sweet words and allowed him to return home in peace.

Damian's argument

Damian has prepared the reader for this highly symbolic chapter through the introduction in the penultimate sentence of the previous chapter of the word **latro** - "thief" - to characterise the simoniacal bishops.[2] In **John** 10:1-2, Christ Himself calls anyone who enters a sheepfold other than by the door a thief, and gives the fact that he enters by the door as a sign of authenticity for the true shepherd of the sheep. A certain unnamed thief is now attempting to gain forced entry to the cell of the future Archbishop Gregory and is threatening to destroy it in the process. Interpreted, this seems to mean that even such pastors as Gregory are threatened by corruption and destruction of the contemplative heart that simoniacs will bring upon them. The purpose of the chapter is to give Romuald's answer to the

problem.

A second link to the previous chapter is made by the interrupted sermon. The same special percipience that has there caused the saint to flood out tears, partly on behalf of those to whom he preached, to the degree that often the sermons were interrupted, now alerts him to the danger confronting Gregory. Having received the revelation, he does not act himself but sends brethren from the chapter as his agents, brethren to whom his instruction in the way of salvation is likened to a feast, implicitly a foretaste of the celestial banquet, and whom he alerts to the danger confronting their brother Gregory's cell in the context of that instruction. In this way, Romuald's words become a channel of saving divine intervention of which the agents are brethren who hear the words and act on them in the institution of his religious community. Although Romuald is physically present in the event described, the manner of this intervention is such that it could be repeated after his "transition to Heaven" through a Romuald still watching over his spiritual offspring from on high, themselves still receiving his teaching as preserved and handed down in the community. That is to say, the Romualdine community will protect its members from the danger posed by simony; which, if understood in the terms of the previous chapter, probably represents secularity generally. The answer to such simony is such a community as Val di Castro.

The latter half of the chapter turns to the question of how simoniacs are to be dealt with. Romuald's response seems to be based in St. Paul's counsel to the Romans:

> **non vosmetipsos vindicantes, carissimi, sed date locum irae, scriptum est enim: "Mihi vindicta, ego retribuam", dicit Dominus. Sed "si esurierit inimicus tuus, ciba illum** [etc.] ... **Noli vinci a malo, sed vince in bono malum.**[3]

Romuald does not know what punishment is due to a simoniac (or thief) because it is not his function to punish such offenders. It is not he who has choked the thieving count of Chapter 10 or broken and blinded the brethren of Bagno in Chapter 18. Damian has Romuald speculate nonetheless on a short list of possible, rather dire, punishments and their consequences probably to ensure that the reader will not misunderstand and assume that severe punishment is inappropriate, that the crime may be lightly dismissed. In fact all these punishments and their consequences, if taken symbolically, may be seen as implicit in the crime, what uncorrected simoniacs will bring upon themselves: they will lose any vision of God, they will starve themselves of saving doctrine and they will be unable to progress on the way to salvation. So Romuald does not inflict the physical punishments equivalent to such spiritual maiming but rather feeds both physically and out of the same supply of spiritual nourishment from which the brethren within the community have already benefited.[4] The way to deal with simoniacs (and thieves) is to communicate God's love to them, to preach them to repentance. In this way evil is overcome by good so thoroughly that the man in the story goes home **in pace. In pace** is how the boy saint of Chapter 38 will die. It is a gift of the Spirit, signifying that these have been drawn into the growing number to whom the Holy Spirit has acceded through Romuald and pointing to an eternity of beatitude for them.

Damian's sources

In this chapter, a story about Romuald's treatment of a thief captured at Val di Castro or one of his other communities has apparently been adapted to make a point about eremitical policy towards simoniacs. To do this, Damian has taken the shell of the story and filled it with

significant details that derive their meaning from the body of Christian literature. Some of the possible sources have been suggested above.

Literal historicity

Again in Chapter 43, although more briefly there, Damian will describe Romuald's gentle correction of a thief. That may be a second use of the same story, a second version of it from another source or, as Damian presents it, a story of a second thief. Unarmed religious in lonely places could expect trouble from brigands from time to time and, if obedient to Biblical precept, may indeed have responded basically as Romuald does in these chapters.

Some difficulty, however, may be caused by Romuald's cheerful listing of various forms of maiming as punishments to be considered for the thief in the story. J. Saward has written of this chapter that it reveals a compassion for sinners "which is free from any trace of condescension and combines resolute spiritual direction with a playful sense of fun". This he understands as a component of Romuald's folly for Christ's sake. Reminding the reader of Romuald's emotional invocation of Christ, he continues:

> A fervent devotion to Our Lord in solitude and contemplation make Romuald a true fool for Christ's sake not so much in the style of the wild ascetics of Byzantium or Ireland but with a new and perhaps distinctively Italian quality of good humour, charm and joy. Romuald is, perhaps, more a clown for Christ's sake.[5]

This interpretation seems quite excessive. Romuald does belong in the tradition of Christian folly,[6] as all true Christians in some sense must, but not as a clown. Where Romuald introduces his list of maimings to the disciples, Saward seems to have over-translated the

word **hilariter**, which need mean only "cheerfully".[7] A comparison may be made to the same chapter of St. Paul identified above as a possible source for Romuald's reaction: **"qui miseretur in hilaritate"** - "he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness".[8] This seems to be what Romuald does, and it has nothing to do with clowning.[9] As suggested above, the list of maimings has probably been introduced from **Luke** and not for the amusement of the captured criminal (who, in his circumstances, might have found it a rather mirthless joke) or of the brethren (which would have been callous) or of the reader, but as a measure by which the seriousness of the crime and the value of the forgiveness and grant of peace may be understood, Romuald's cheerfulness indicating from the start that he has no intention of actually inflicting any such punishment. If he has no such intention, then the list is, for those within the story, superfluous. Its **raison d'etre** is the instruction of the reader. Early medieval saints' **Lives** like this one, it has been argued above, are not generally naturalistic character studies.[10]

NOTES

1. Anxia quadam animadversione.
2. Cf. c.35 n.26.
3. **Romans** 12:19-21.
4. In so doing this he follows Christ's precept in **Luke** 14:13 that to a feast a host should call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. This thief is spiritually in all four categories at once. As such guests cannot pay recompense, Christ adds, the host will be blessed at the end of time.
5. J. Saward, **Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality** (Oxford, 1980), pp. 50-51.
6. Cf. cc. 13 and 35.
7. In c.10, Romuald's familiaris has served him hilariter: VR p.31 l.16.
8. **Romans** 12:8.
9. Saward, op.cit., p.50, similarly overtranslates "alacritas" as "spiritual bounce" when it need mean only "eagerness" or "enthusiasm".
10. Cf. introduction n.25.

CHAPTER 37 ROMUALD IS THOUGHT TO WANT TO ASSOCIATE THE WHOLE WORLD TO THE MONASTIC ORDER

Although short, this chapter may be divided into three historiographical units of one Latin sentence each: (i) Romuald founds a monastery at Orvieto; (ii) he wishes the whole world to be charged with eremitism; (iii) he establishes more communities around Orvieto.

Damian's argument

(i) He founds a monastery at Orvieto.

> Eventually, when he had distributed no small number of his disciples in Val di Castro, he transferred himself to the Orvieto region and built a monastery on the estate of Count Pharulph. There were indeed many supporters, but principally Count Pharulph provided for the expenses.[1]

Thus Romuald's disciples take over his task of leavening with the Holy Spirit, almost after the order of an apostolate. He is thus freed to move on himself to another region.

Damian turns now to explain Romuald's motivation in a statement that may be taken as a summary of his own belief about the function of eremitism in the world:

(ii) He is thought to want to make a hermitage of the whole earth.

> For there burnt in the sainted man's breast a white-hot ardour for bearing fruit so great that he was never content with what had been achieved, and while he was still doing one thing, he would already be pushing on to others; to such an extent that he was thought[2] to want[3] to convert the whole earth into a hermitage[4] and associate the entire multitude of the people to the monastic order.

Restraint is necessary in the interpretation of this important

sentence. In his study of Damian's monastic theology, G. Miccoli has referred to it in succession to his less-than-fully convincing argument that Damian contended that Christians who failed to become monks thereby failed to fulfil all the obligations implicit in their baptism and to this extent went back on it.[5]

> **Dans cette perspective,** he writes, **on comprend que Pierre Damien invite tous les hommes à la vie du monastère ou de l'ermitage, conformement au programme de saint Romuald: "Totum mundum in eremum convertere", "monachico ordini omnem populi multitudinem sociare."**

His quotation is neither complete nor taken in context. By omitting the two important words **putaretur** and **velle**, Miccoli makes a programme for Romuald out of what Damian presents only as someone else's interpretation of the saintly founder's motivating vision, a vision unrestrained by concern for earthly practicability and therefore unsullied by any compromise with the world. This limitless ambition is not to be taken as a programme but rather as a pointer to the spiritual condition of the founder of the new communities. The context supports only such an interpretation. For the first part of the sentence concerns the white heat of Romuald's proselytizing ardour and the concomitant earnestness of his rapid progress from one task to another, to which the statement that he was understood by others to want to convert the whole earth is appended as historical evidence. The point of the sentence as a whole is about Romuald's limitless zeal to bear fruit, not about his doctrine of monastic **versus** lay life.[6]

That Damian should choose to introduce the idea of universal conversion is nonetheless significant, especially in the wider context of Romuald's making fertile for God whole regions such as Val di Castro. What exactly Damian is to be understood as intending by doing so depends partly on how the word **heremus** is read. Miccoli apparently

interpreted this simply as "hermitage"; Romuald wished to make all the world a hermitage and therefore everyone in it a kind of monk. Dom Jean Leclercq, however, in one of his valuable studies of ecclesiastical vocabulary, has pointed out that the word did not generally mean exactly a hermitage in this period but, retaining much of its ancient sense of "desert", referred to an uninhabited place.[7] In this case, when Damian refers to an **heremus** in the **Life**, he may mean not just a hermitage in the narrowest sense but its otherwise unpeopled locale as well, a "desert place". The great tradition of the Egyptian and other East Mediterranean desert fathers of antiquity showed authoritatively that in the desert places it was possible for a religious to escape the contagion of communal secularity in which the demons lurked unseen and be trained to confront them head-on in solitary and decisive combat. Although Europe lacked deserts of the Egyptian kind, she retained forests, lonely mountains, swamps and islands where latter-day desert warriors like Romuald could engage in similar combat, as Romuald has done in the Pyrenees in Chapter 7 and at St. Martin's-in-the-Wood by Classe in Chapters 16 and 17. The **heremus** thus stood symbolically in opposition to the **seculum**, the everyday, transient, illusory world occupied by the mass of fallen humanity, on whose corporate behalf, as well as their own, the saintly hermits prayed and battled in their isolation. It is in this symbolic sense that Damian must be using the word if he wishes the stated ambition to be taken seriously.

To convert the whole earth into an **heremus** is, then, to transform it all into the kind of place where it would be suitable to found a hermitage, a place where the inhabitants would corporately see and understand in conformity with the contemplatives so that, instead of escaping from the multitude, the spiritual leaders could take them

along as supporters and associates. This is what has begun to happen at Val di Castro, where first the lay nobility and then a flood of humanity have put their worldly **virtus** and then their lives into Romuald's sacralising power. In the next chapter one of the sons of the nobility will begin to see the demons openly as Romuald does and, when the boy has died, miracles at his shrine will restore sight and otherwise heal large numbers resorting to him. He himself will be fully converted to the religious life, one of the **elite** in one of the regions blessed by Romuald's presence, but he becomes a channel of grace to a whole people. Both through such representatives and by their own repentant reforms (as those described for Val di Castro) such a whole people becomes associated to the saints. And so the **heremus** invades the **seculum** and all the earth is sacralised. It is not necessary for every individual to become a monk.[8]

(iii) He makes further foundations.

> Accordingly, he carried many off from the world in that place, and divided them among numerous sacred places.

Romuald does as he has done at Val di Castro and plants his disciples throughout the region.

Damian's sources

The record of Romuald's dispersal of his disciples through Val di Castro and of the provision for him by Count Pharulph at Orvieto, constituting the first sentence, apparently originates in two oral reminiscences not necessarily at all related. The former point is made again for Orvieto at the end of the chapter and may be based in general knowledge of Romuald's methods rather than a particular story about Val di Castro. Damian shows no sign of any further knowledge of

Orvieto.

The white-hot ardour and perceived desire to convert the whole earth that make up the middle section is clearly editorial in the form in which it is here expressed, that of a generalising summary, although the perception of motive may pre-date Damian as he claims it does. In addition to the purpose to which it is here put, it could serve to explain Romuald's evident lack of geographical stability,[9] which may have caused a certain embarrassment or fear of misunderstanding to monastic observers conscious of St. Benedict's precept,[10] so its present cast is possibly Damian's own.

Literal historicity

Once again Romuald appears as one of the magnetic holy men around whom inchoate communities gathered, from which he departed without having very formally constituted them. The count appears as one of those noblemen who were the temporal founders of such communities and virtually their lay proprietors.

NOTES

1. Cf. c.34 n.5.
2. Putaretur.
3. Velle.
4. Eremus.
5. G. Miccoli, **Théologie de la vie monastique chez Saint Pierre Damien** (1007-1072), (Paris, 1961), pp. 470-471. The passages from Damian that Miccoli cites to support this argument may alternatively be interpreted as a critique of those who take baptism or (of more particular interest to Damian) the habit and fail to reform their lives accordingly. It seems impossible to believe that Damian could have contended all that Miccoli claims on his behalf: "Pierre Damien montre que le baptême ne régénère pas s'il n'inaugure pas un mode de vie nouveau, et il passe resolument a une interpretation strictement monastique ... Le radicalisme ascetique de Pierre Damien apparaît en ce que leur vie [that of secular Christians] n'est pas seulement une vie chrétienne moins parfaite; elle semble presque devenir une vie de non-grâce." This would reduce Christian lay folk to a state

little better than hypocrisy or false hope (there is no salvation without grace). Romuald has himself in fact carried grace to Tivoli in chapter 23 and individual lay folk will be miraculously blessed through him in several chapters later in the **Life**, beginning with the next one. Bernard Hamilton, op.cit., pp.200-201 n.94, argues (against Bultot, whom he cites) that neither Damian nor Romuald was basically pessimistic about the mundus.

6. Henrietta Leyser, rather oddly, translates a portion of the same passage differently in two different chapters of her **Hermits and the New Monasticism** (op.cit.): "it seemed as if the whole world would be turned into a hermitage" (p.1); and, "it looked as if he wanted to turn the whole world into a hermitage and for everyone to be joined together in the monastic order" (p.31). Of these, the latter is probably closer to Damian's meaning, and her comment that "it is difficult to know whether Romuald's basic conception of his work ever changed" is sound; there really is no apparent "programme".
7. J. Leclercq, " Eremus et Eremita : Pour l'histoire du vocabulaire de la vie solitaire", in **Collectanea ordinis Cisterciensium reformatorum**, vol. 25, part 1 (January & March 1963), p.23. Leclercq himself, however, does not make any argument about Romuald's desire to convert the world; cf. his **Peter Damian**, p.26.
8. Hamilton, op.cit., argues that as Damian believed each Christian to be a microcosm (cf., e.g., Op.11, **Liber qui dicitur Dominus vobiscum**, PL145, 235A-236B), eremitism did not exist for the salvation of individual souls but to expedite the coming of God's kingdom, each perfect individual contributing to the forces of the whole body, the contemplatives being the elite of the Christian army; pp.177 and 201.
9. Indeed, for this one move it still does so. Damian is able to give no more particular reason for Romuald's move to Orvieto.
10. **Ben. Reg.** c.58. In c.49, Damian will raise the issue explicitly.

CHAPTER 38 MIRACLES ARE PERFORMED THROUGH A CHILD DISCIPLE

Six historiographical divisions may be made in this chapter: (i) the first sentence, in which noble youths flock to Romuald; (ii) the second to sixth sentences (to p.78 l.20), in which one of these openly sees demons and is absolved by Romuald at death; (iii) the seventh and eighth sentences (to p.79 l.3), where a man's sight is restored at the departed youth's tomb; (iv) the ninth sentence (to p.79 l.5), stating that other sick people were cured there; (v) the second last sentence (to p.79 l.6), describing the sweet aromas there; (vi) the last sentence, in which the cause of sanctity is identified.

Damian's argument

(i) Young noblemen leave their parents for Romuald.

> Not a few sons of the nobility also, despising their parents, ran away to the blessed man.

Thus Damian forces a logical connection between Romuald's extraction of many from the **seculum** in the previous chapter and the following story of a particular boy saint. The cause of his sanctity, which will not be mentioned in the body of the story but to which Damian will return at the end, is also suggested in advance.

(ii) Count Guy's son sees demons but dies in peace.

> And among these was Count Guy's son, who, approaching [his] death not long after he had been made a monk and while still in [his] very boyhood[1], saw two evil spirits, like the blackest vultures, frightening things, fastening themselves into his eyes. And when the boy called out about this to the blessed Romuald, who was with him, he immediately added: 'Look, master, now there are Ethiopians coming in, so big that they are already filling up the whole building.' And he urged to be allowed to confess what he had done wrong. This offence alone did that fortunate sinner, with great terror, confess: that he had been

> ordered by the prior to receive a number of strokes - I do not know how many - which he had not yet received. And so Romuald absolved him[2] of this great sin [and] he died in peace.

In contrast to the chapters where previous disciples of Romuald have shown signs of sanctity, this section gives no description of the sainted boy's **conversatio**; nor is he a martyr. Although his death in peace comes only after he has confessed to Romuald, his ability to see openly the demons that are attacking him, together with the fact that he had only one sin to confess, and that a minor one, show that he was already on the verge of sanctity. The main point of the chapter is yet to come, in the miracle story of the next section, prepared for here by the introduction of the symbol of the eyes and this brief demonstration that the operative sanctity is one of the **animarum fructus** of Romuald in one of his new foundations.

(iii) Sight is restored to a dependant of the boy's father at the tomb.

> Now on the next day a certain blind man, in fact a member of his father's household[3], came to that boy's sepulchre and cried out, [raising his] voice very high: "Oh my Lord, if you are with God, as I believe, pour out prayers for me to Him and restore to me the light of my eyes." And as soon as this was said, the light came upon him.

Although there is no reason to doubt that this story is to be taken literally, it is clearly not a record of mere thaumaturgy. The blindness that afflicts this **familiaris** of the boy's father is associated with the demonic blindness the evil spirits have attempted to inflict on the boy himself in the previous sentences, a blindness that is not merely physical but part of that total invasion of the edifice of the Christian person that is spiritual death. This continuity of the physical and the spiritual, through which physical symptoms may be signs of spiritual diseases and healing must take place in both aspects to render a sick person "whole" again, is one of

the constant themes of Christianity from the very beginning. Here Damian assumes it rather than argues it. What evidently interests him is that the boy who has been "gathered" into the divine light by putting his life into Romuald's hands in one of Romuald's communities has become an intermediary through whom others may be brought in association with him into the same light, even as they remain in the world. To qualify the point, Damian turns briefly to note that the man in this story was not unique:

(iv) Others are healed too.

> No small number of [other] sick people also came to his tomb and were sent away healed.

The blessings flow not only to those already associated with the sainted boy, as the **praebendarius** is, but to any who seek to associate themselves. To this extent the miracle story functions as a kind of comment on the previous chapter's central statement that Romuald "**putaretur totum mundum in heremum velle convertere et monachico ordini omnem populi multitudinem sotiare.**" The whole Christian community may share in the beatitude of the young convert, who has been gathered to the beatitude of Romuald, who lives anticipatively in Heaven in the beatitude of the desert places.

(v) The tomb is sweetly scented.

> For even his very sepulchre - all of it - was redolent as though with many sweet scents.

This is another traditional sign of sanctity, an intrusion of perfection into the midst of the world's and the demons' corruption and decay.

(vi) The sanctity is granted for dissociation from parents.

> And he who for His love spurned the inheritance of carnal parents while alive, deserved to be thus honoured by God after death.

Thus the boy radically dissociates himself from his worldly parents, as Romuald has implicitly done in Chapter 1,[4] and is transferred to the **familia** of God and the inheritance of the elect. The honour bestowed on him for this, however, is evidenced not just by the sweet aromas at the shrine but also by the miracles of healing there, of which the first beneficiary has been a member of the boy's own former household. The act of spurning, therefore, has not in fact destroyed his familial relationships but transformed them. When the boy who has spurned his legacy of sin and corruption has instead come into his celestial inheritance of perfection, he has the **virtus** to act as **heavenly** patron to his earthly father's **praebendarius**.

Damian's sources

The second and third of the six sections contain the core information around which Damian has built the chapter.

The second section, where the boy sees the demons and is absolved to die in peace, has been assimilated to the already ancient tradition of demonic apparitions[5] but it retains the form of an independently transmissible death story. Such a story would have been of considerable interest to anyone promoting or visiting the boy's shrine and its assimilation to established tradition may well have occurred before Damian heard it. That it was Romuald to whom the boy called out when having his vision and Romuald who absolved him would not, however, necessarily have been of equal interest to everyone concerned

with the boy's death, and it may be suspected that Damian has himself emphasised Romuald's role.

The story of the restored sight in the third section is closely paired with the death story in this chapter. Because of the parallel between the vision problems in these two stories, this pairing may also predate Damian's redaction, although the miracle story could presumably also have circulated independently. Although a hagiographical story of a very common kind, this latter shows no sign of manipulation by the redactor.

How much Damian knew about the other healings and the sweet scents mentioned in the fourth and fifth sections is not clear. As the brief generalising summary about the great number of healings is sufficient for his purpose, he may have known further whole stories from the shrine and chosen not to record them or he may have really known only the paired death and healing stories that appear. Similarly, the allusion to the aromas may be a summary of another story or it may have originated as an appendage to the death story of the second section.

The first and last sentences of the chapter, in both of which parents are spurned for religion, are clearly editorial. They link the chapter logically to the conversion work of the previous chapter, provide an explanation for a sanctity not justified by a notable ascetic **conversatio** and allow a comparatively simple healing miracle to take on a heightened significance.

Literal historicity

The gathering of noble sons, some even still in their boyhood, because they despised their parents and spurned their worldly inheritance, cannot be taken entirely literally. Such sons would have been child oblates, probably in the **coenobia.** They would rarely have been free agents; rather, the parents themselves would have decided that their offspring would "reject" them in this way, the contempt involved being in most cases purely formal and not to be understood in a psychological or emotional sense. Such oblates had been common for centuries and did come primarily from the noble classes who endowed and patronised the monasteries.[6]

NOTES

1. Or "youth"; pueritia.
2. "Romualdo ... sibi tanti facinoris veniam indulgente."
3. Praebendarius; a dependant receiving sustenance in his lord's household and owing daily service; cf. Niermeyer.
4. Cf. c.1 n.21.
5. Cf. chapter 17 above. On the particular significance of vision, cf. **Matthew** 6:22-23 and **John** 10:21.
6. Cf. Lawrence, pp.63-64; also pp.32-33.

CHAPTER 39 ROMUALD SEEKS MARTYRDOM IN HUNGARY BUT INSTEAD FINDS ABUSE AT ORVIETO

This chapter may be divided historiographically into nine: (i) the first sentence (to p.79 1.12) in which Romuald hears of Bruno's death and is inspired to seek martyrdom in Hungary; (ii) the second sentence (to p.80 1.1), in which he first founds three monasteries in Italy; (iii) the third sentence (to p.80 1.3), in which he receives papal permission and departs with two archbishops and twenty-four brethren; (iv) the fourth sentence (to p.80 1.5), explaining the size of the party; (v) the remainder of the first paragraph (to p.81 1.4), in which sickness forces him to return and those brethren who continue also fail to find martyrdom; (vi) the first sentence of the second paragraph, in which he leads German converts to Orvieto; (vii) the second sentence of the second paragraph (to p.81 1.12), where it is pointed out that he thus succeeds anyway with those for whose salvation he had been sent; (viii) the third and fourth sentences of the second paragraph, in which he is persecuted in the monastery because he wants the abbot to live in the manner of a true monk; (ix) the final sentence, in which he takes his disciples and removes to Preggio.

Damian's argument

The opening sentence sets the scene:

(i) Romuald arranges to go to Hungary.

> Meanwhile, Romuald heard that that most blessed man Boniface [Bruno] had received martyrdom and, inflamed with the fire of a great desire to pour out his blood for Christ, decided at once to go to Hungary.

(ii) He first founds three monasteries.

> In the meantime, however, while he continued in this intention, he established three monasteries in a short time: namely, one in Val di Castro, where his most holy body is now buried[1]; another by the Esino River; and the third he founded[2] by the town of Ascoli.

The full significance of this digression is in the pun on the word **condo**, which can mean both "build" or "found" and "store up" or "bury". As Romuald's desire that his blood be shed in martyrdom was never to be granted, Damian begins to imply immediately the alternative function intended for him and his body before the story of the unsuccessful martyrdom attempt is told. For if both senses of **condo** are understood each time it is used in the above sentence, then the holy body is not merely buried and so stored away (for future resurrection and as a treasure) but is also built into the monastery, perhaps after the model of "the Church's one Foundation" Himself; and the monasteries are not simply built or founded but are "stored up", like a body awaiting resurrection and as a treasure. Thus, as previously in the **Life**, there is a close identification of Romuald with the communities that are his spiritual progeny, even after his death.

The succeeding two sentences are more straightforward:

(iii) He obtains papal permission and begins the journey.

> Then, when leave had been received from the apostolic see and two of his disciples had been consecrated archbishops, he started upon the journey with twenty-four brethren.

(iv) The size of his party is explained.

For such great ardour to die for Christ burnt in them all, that it was hard for the sainted man to go on such a [special] undertaking[3] with only a few.

(v) He is prevented by sickness from completing the journey.

And so they went; and when, in time, they were on the very borders of Pannonia, Romuald was suddenly taken ill and unable to go any further. And during his suffering, which lasted for some time, he would immediately grow better from the sickness whenever he would decide to go back. If, on the other hand, he tried to go further, his whole face would immediately swell up and he could not then retain food in his weakened stomach. And so he summoned the brethren and said: "It is my opinion that it is not at all the judgment[4] of the divine will that I should proceed further. Nevertheless, because I am not unaware of the [great] longing behind your intention, I shall compel none of you to return. Certainly, a great many before us have endeavoured with their every effort to reach the pinnacle of martyrdom but, because divine providence has decided[5] otherwise, have been forced to stay in their own rank. Although, therefore, I have no doubt that martyrdom will fail all of you, who may wish to go and who to return with me will nonetheless be left to be determined[6] by each one." Accordingly, as fifteen went on to Hungary and two had already been sent away elsewhere, barely seven disciples remained with the master. And indeed, some of those who went on were scourged, were sold, submitted to a number of lords; to martyrdom, however - just as the sainted man had predicted - they did not attain.

Thus Romuald's failure to attain to the greatest glory of sanctity is accounted for. His will was sufficient but it was not the will of God, Whose intention is clearly read in the withdrawal of strength and soundness from the very body that the saint has already been shown to be about to build into Italian monasticism instead. The master's followers who ignore this sign and go where they have not been led bring only hardship upon themselves and not martyrdom. They achieve nothing. Romuald, on the other hand, in the next section, will achieve - alive in Italy - just what his martyrdom would have achieved among the tramontanes and will also suffer once again at the hands of those to whom he is sent; actual martyrdom is not necessary for him.

This may be intended not only as a statement about Romuald but also as

a lesson to any who might wish to model themselves on him in his "foundations" or other communities. Actual martyrdom could not be actively pursued in a north Italian monastery or hermitage. Here, without any disestimation of the great tradition of the martyrs, it is shown that brethren whose vocation is not to martyrdom err when they go out of the way on which God has set them to pursue it instead of their own saving **conversatio.**

(vi) He returns to Orvieto with a number of Germans.

> But Romuald converted a certain high nobleman - in fact a brother of Duke Adalbero, who continued in the holy conversation, after he had been made a monk, right through to his death - and returned with him and other Germans to the monastery he had built in the Orvieto region.

Thus the still-living Romuald oversees the transition of new converts to the holy life. As when he has taken the imperial converts to Pereo, it is emphasised that their journey is to a place he has himself "edified"; they are assimilated to his own holiness. Damian ensures that the significance of this, relative to the failed martyrdom attempt, is not missed:

(vii) He thus saves as effectively as if he had been martyred.

> And so it is to be noted that the sainted man could not by any means be cheated with ineffectuality, as if he were light-weight.[7] He indeed submitted to martyrdom according to his own intention, but in fact, in conformity with divine counsel, he converted those for whose salvation he was sent.

Romuald wins both ways, and the fact that his prophetic powers seem temporarily to have failed him is implicitly explained; it was indeed God's will that he go to this place, even though for a reason different from the one he had supposed, and his ignorance of the true reason allowed him to submit to martyrdom at heart.

Damian follows up this point with a return to martyrdom **in voto** of a kind that has already appeared in the **Life**:

(viii) He suffers in the monastery.

> And in the aforesaid monastery he suffered many outrages of persecution. For he wanted the abbot, as a true monk, to love extremity, not to deal in worldly affairs by desire, not to spend the monastery's effects on vainglory, [but] to furnish what was necessary for the use of the brethren.

As in previous cases where Romuald has suffered abuse in monasteries, the nature of the persecution is not specified. His demands of this abbot are not at all contentious, as was his requirement of the abbot of Pereo in chapter 30 that he live in eremitical withdrawal from his charges, and no evidence is offered to support the implication that this prelate was wickedly worldly. Clearly Damian is not really interested here in Romuald's relationship with this particular monastery or abbot; they have become mere figures in his argument. Romuald, whom God has not ordained to be a martyr to the pagans beyond the mountains, is shown to be a virtual martyr to the monks among whom he works in Italy.

Thus the argument begun with the unruly brethren of Bagno in chapter 18 is developed fully. The concept of martyrdom **in voto** historically underlies the whole idea of sanctity by confessorship.[8] It pervades this **Life**, but here, where the comparison with the attempted actual martyrdom is made, it is given its most explicit treatment and its peculiar cast concerning the hermit's problem with insubordinate monks.[9]

So Romuald is driven away, and takes his new converts with him:

(ix) He removes to Preggio.

> As [the abbot] contemptuously turned a deaf ear to all this, Romuald abandoned the place with his disciples and dwelt not far from Preggio, in the area under Rainier's authority[10] - [Rainier] who was afterwards created Marquis of Tuscany.

More will be said of Rainier in the next chapter.

Damian's sources

Of the nine sections into which this chapter has been divided, the fifth and longest, concerning the significant sickness, is the one of central interest to Damian and he has constructed the chapter around it. As it appears in a form in which it may have been independently transmissible, it is possible that he has recorded it more or less as he heard it. It stands, however, equally well without the references to martyrdom; it is then a story (or conflation of two stories) about a mission on which Romuald was (fortuitously?) taken ill and about the unpleasant ends suffered by some who went further, a story into which Damian might himself have read the deeper meaning. In either case, the more straightforward and shorter third section, stating that Romuald went with papal licence and twenty-four brethren, probably originates in the memory of the same episode, while the sixth section, concerning the German converts brought back, may well do so too, although an independent story cannot be ruled out here.

The second and ninth sections, however, are clearly unrelated to the rest of the chapter. Damian makes no attempt to establish a historical connection between the bare record of the foundation of the three monasteries that constitutes the second, while the removal to Preggio is part of the reminiscence out of which he has constructed the next chapter.

The status of the eighth section, in which Romuald is persecuted for his unwelcome advice to the abbot near Orvieto, is questionable. It is certainly unrelated to the main story of the chapter and it is too vague, scanty and colourless to have circulated independently in anything like its present form. If it is a two-sentence summary of a much longer story about Romuald's suffering in the monastery, then the question arises why Damian has not expanded on the virtual martyrdom involved by telling the whole story. It seems likely, therefore, that he has deduced it himself from a general knowledge of Romuald's teaching, of coenobitic reaction to such precepts and of the removal to Preggio (for which he apparently knows no other explanation). The absence of any specific allegations against this community and the fact that Romuald is depicted as suffering in every **coenobium** in the **Life** (except those merely alluded to in passing) would support this contention.

The remaining sections of the chapter - the first, fourth and seventh - are plainly editorial.

Literal historicity

As Tabacco notes[11], some difficulty arises with this record of Romuald's mission to Hungary when it is remembered that King Stephen had already organised the Hungarian Church. This difficulty, however, is caused by Damian's claim that Romuald was seeking in that country a martyrdom like Bruno's and took with him the two newly consecrated archbishops (Engelbert and Gregory) who have appeared in earlier chapters[12] as archbishops **in gentibus**; the implication being that Romuald was leading a mission to pagans. It may be noted, however, that Romuald was not himself consecrated, that two of the party had

already left before he took sick and that he returned to Orvieto with Germans whom he had in some unexplained manner picked up in Pannonia. There is little to be gained through speculation on flimsy evidence, but this might suggest that there were in fact two parties travelling for different reasons, although perhaps together for some of the way. For it is the two archbishops who are the most likely to be the pair excused by Damian from Romuald's negative counsel in the matter of going further (they had been consecrated expressly to do so) and it seems unlikely that they and the other brethren who went on formed quite separate parties, the former unattended by any companions and the latter released from obedience to any apparent superior. The latter party, which went further and suffered some hardships, was therefore probably not primarily intended to accompany Romuald at all. The smaller party, which returned with him and his great convert and the other Germans to the last monastery in which Romuald has been described as protractedly active, then appears more like an escort party whose mission was to go to the Italian borderland to meet high-ranking Germans whose conversion and penitence at Orvieto were already envisaged and accompany them through Italy to their new home; much as Abbot Guarin had escorted the repentant doge of Venice and his companions to monastic exile in the Pyrenees and Guarin and John Gradenigo had taken Count Oliba to Monte Cassino in chapter 15.

However this may be, it must be concluded that this chapter cannot be taken as reliable evidence that Romuald intended to lead a mission to Hungarian or other pagans in the north.[13] It is even questionable whether Damian's intention was to show that he did or rather to explain why he did not.

NOTES

1. Est conditum.
2. Condidit.
3. Iudicium.
4. Ad tale negotium.
5. Sensit.
6. Arbitrio; all three of the words in nn..3, 5 & 6 can be terms of legal judgment.
7. Velut levitate usus.
8. Cf. H. Delehaye, **Sanctus** (Studia hagiographica 17) (Brussels, 1927), pp. 109-121: "Du martyr au confesseur", and Lawrence, p.3.
9. More commonly in the monastic tradition, it was the daily struggle with conscience and asceticism that constituted this form of martyrdom, as in the **Vita Antonii**, c.47. Cf. again Lawrence, p.3. See also c.20 above, where it is suggested that Damian therefore possibly regarded Romuald's as a fuller mortification than Antony's.
10. In virtute Ranieri; Niermeyer, p.1, 112, cites this sentence from the VR as evidence that virtus could mean "area under sway of an authority."
11. VR p.79 n.3.
12. VR cc. 33 and 36.
13. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, p.93, calls Damian's evidence "un racconto in parte favoloso" but accepts that Romuald intended to go as a missionary because Damian says so. Cf. c.28 n.23 above for the opinion of Wenskus and Leclercq that the use of Pereo as a mission base by Bruno had in fact been opposed by Romuald because it threatened his own work there; although it is of course possible that he had changed his mind on such activity since then.

CHAPTER 40 ROMUALD REPRESENTS THE MAJESTY OF GOD TO SINNERS

This shorter chapter may be divided most conveniently into three: (i) the first four sentences (to p.83 l.6), telling of the awe Romuald struck into the heart of Rainier; (ii) the remaining two sentences of the paragraph, in which Damian generalises on the same point; (iii) the final sentence of the chapter, briefly noting Romuald's foundation of another monastery.

Damian's argument

(i) Sinful Rainier finds himself defenceless before Romuald.

> Now this Rainier had put aside his wife on the grounds of near relationship[1] and had joined in marriage with the wife of his brother, whom he had himself somewhat unwillingly killed while being pursued by him. And so because of this Romuald would not stay on his estate free[2], in case he should become a partner in his crime, but paid on his own behalf one gold coin for water and another for wood. Although [Rainier] quite refused these, evidently preferring to give of his own than to receive anything from the sainted man, he was nonetheless overcome in the end and assented rather than let Romuald go away. For that same Rainier used to say, when he had come to hold the marquisate: "Not [even] the emperor - no mortal at all - can strike dread into me like that with which the sight of Romuald terrifies me. Indeed, before his face neither do I know what to say nor can I find any excuses with which I might be able to defend myself."

Although various lay patrons have appeared in the **Life**, it is at this point that Damian begins to examine Romuald's function in relation to this important category of Christians and to lay nobles more generally. As elsewhere in the work, his argument is not entirely explicit but largely suggested by key words and images.

In these sentences it seems that the image of the wood and water may be taken as a key. The typological associations of these materials separately are very numerous. As a pair they are associated with such

important objects as Noah's ark (itself a type of the Church) and the Cross. The wood and water that Romuald refuses to accept from Rainier may therefore be taken not only as physical necessities for his holy **conversatio** but also as representative of the spiritual necessities. A key word in the argument is **gratis**, in the phrase "**gratis manere**" - to stay without payment (which may be paired with the similar-sounding "**munere gratiam**" of the next section). For although the primary meaning of **gratis** in this context is the same as its modern meaning, its association by pun with divine grace begins to suggest how it is that Romuald could become a partner in Rainier's sin by accepting the wood and water as a gift from him and why he should not. For by the Pauline doctrine of grace, no good work in God's service can be done except by divine grace; grace which enables the Christian "**et velle et perficere pro suo beneplacito**"[10]. It follows, therefore, that those who have earlier patronised Romuald by providing him **gratis** with living space and necessities to conduct his saving **conversatio** on their **virtutes** (itself, as suggested in relation chapter 35, a significant word) as a religious good work on their own part, have done so in divine grace such that the ultimate source of the patronage has been in fact God Himself. In such a process, the saint and patron become partners in each other's (all ultimately God's) good works and Christian lives within the great mystical union embracing Father, Son, saints and all the baptised. This is all assumed rather than argued, but it disqualifies Rainier's offering as such a work because his major sin has (apparently) not been repented. As he is living in sin, not with God, his attempted good work is not of divine origin but an endeavour on his own initiative to buy into partnership with the saint, the true nature of which Romuald shows up by valuing it in gold. Although his response to the holy man is quite different, Rainier is an unacceptable patron equivalent in his own category to

the unacceptable simoniacal abbot of the next chapter.

Because Rainier does not reject Romuald, however, the saint does not dissociate himself from the sinner as he has departed from the worldly abbot of the preceding chapter and from other coenobites previously. His function is to put the fear of God into the man, striking him dumb with the very sight of his dread countenance. Damian turns to establish immediately that Rainier was not the only one to benefit in this way:

(ii) Romuald represents the majesty of God to sinners.

> The sainted man in fact had, by divine gift[3], the grace that sinners who came into his presence - whoever they were [but] especially the powerful of the world - would immediately be so frightened that their flesh would quake as though they were before the majesty of God. Undoubtedly [it was] the Holy Spirit, Who dwelt in his breast, [Who] divinely threatened the unrighteous by this terror.

Superficially, such a picture of the dreadful holy man is inconsistent with that of the kindly one who has **hilariter** fed and gently rebuked the thief found in Archbishop Gregory's cell in chapter 36 and who will remain always cheerful and always serene of face in chapters 53 and 67. Neither does it fit well with the stories of the spiritually careless monks who have lightly disregarded the saint's counsel in the preceding chapter, at Bagno in chapter 18 and elsewhere, or with that of the simoniacal abbot who will attempt to strangle him in the next chapter, all of them apparently oblivious of his status. The explanation of this apparent inconsistency is probably that none of these pictures, as argued above, is naturalistic[4] or a character portrait. Each is like a distinct icon representing a different function of the saint. Although he stands representative quite constantly of the divinity alive within him, he will appear

differently to the different interlocutors who come and go in the Life, according to their own responses to God. Those who are willing to accept the love He holds out to them, which brings boundless life, will find Him loving beyond measure; those who have distanced themselves from Him, vainly hoping to win His indulgence without the reassimilation of themselves to His will that is repentance, will find a clear vision of Him dreadful beyond utterance; those who have cut themselves off entirely, committing themselves to lives of continuing sin, will angrily resent the intrusion of His demands. These reactions extend to the saint in whose breast He dwells; a sinner's response to Romuald is as though a test of his response to God. Although Damian is apparently unable to complete the story with a record of Rainier's repentance, the jolt given to the basically well-intentioned noble sinner when he realises his condition is clearly to be understood as salutary.

The chapter closes with a bare note of another foundation:

(iii) He founds another monastery.

> And in that same period the venerable man built a monastery not far from Marsiliana castle.[5]

Damian's sources

The first and longest part of this chapter, concerning Rainier, may itself be divided into three: (i) the first sentence (to p.82 1.6), relating his crime; (ii) the second (to p.82 1.8), in which Romuald insists on paying for his wood and water to avoid becoming Rainier's accomplice; (iii) the third and fourth sentences (to p.83 1.6), where Rainier later describes the effect Romuald has on him. As the events

described in these sections occurred at three different times, it is possible that they came to Damian in three separate stories which he has himself conflated; or perhaps the first two already paired and the third separately. It is certainly possible that the import of Rainier's confession was originally that the appearance of the austere and evidently holy Romuald impressed him more than that of the emperor[6] or any other man of the world - the sense of its opening sentence - and that Damian has himself extrapolated the inability to make excuses that makes of the awe a truly religious experience. The form of the story as it stands, however, is one in which it could meaningfully have circulated before Damian wrote it down, whereas each of the three component parts is too brief and scanty to have circulated in anything like the form in which it now appears. The simpler explanation, therefore, is that Romuald has recorded or summarised what was already a single story, circulating in memory of either Romuald, as here, or possibly the great marquis.

The status of the final sentence, in which Romuald founds the new monastery, is quite unclear. The information is so slight that it is impossible to tell how much Damian knew about this or whether he believed it to have anything to do with Rainier.

The intervening second section, the generalising summary about Romuald's impact on sinners, is clearly editorial. The concept of the Holy Spirit resident within the Christian, which will be developed further in the next chapter and reappear in chapter 53, is Pauline.[7]

Literal historicity

The greater part of this chapter, including the interesting information that Romuald was able to pay for provisions in gold and did so on this occasion[8] cannot be checked. In the light of Romuald's strained relations with a string of abbots and other coenobites, Damian's statement that it was especially the **"potentes seculi"** who were moved to awe by him is thrown into relief. It may well be true that the much-travelled hermit received more encouragement and assistance from lay patrons to whom he appeared obviously holy than from institutional monastic authorities in whose books he may sometimes have seemed rather irregular.[9]

NOTES

1. Occasio propinquatis; Niermeyer gives occasio as either "reason" or "pretext".
2. Gratis.
3. Ex divino munere; munus can also mean "fief", perhaps intended to be contrasted with the possessio of Rainer from which Romuald refuses to accept any gifts.
4. Cf. the introduction n.25.
5. Massiliano castro; as Tabacco notes, VR p.83 n.3, the identity of this castle is not really certain.
6. On trembling before God as though in the presence of the emperor, cf. c.25 n.3.
7. 1st **Corinthians** 6:18-20.
8. From the money sent to him by Hugh of Tuscany in chapter 18?
9. Even Bruno admitted that Romuald was highly unstable: Vfr. c.2 p.718. Less devoted observers might have been less ready to excuse him.

CHAPTER 41 A SIMONIACAL ABBOT TRIES TO STRANGLE ROMUALD

Two historiographical units may be discerned in this chapter: (i) the first sentence, in which Romuald returns to Sant 'Apollinare to rid it of an evil abbot; (ii) the remainder of the chapter, in which the abbot attempts to strangle the saint but is foiled by Engelbert.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald returns to save Sant 'Apollinare from simony.

> Now he heard at some time that a certain Venetian had usurped the abbacy of Classe by purchase through the heresy of simony[1], and in addition [to this] sinned wickedly against his own body[2]. The indefatigable soldier of Christ immediately put himself to going there and attempted by various means to purge the monastery of him.

These lines are founded on the same passage of St. Paul that underlies the previous chapter:

> **"Fugite fornicationem. Omne peccatum, quodcomque fecerit homo, extra corpus est: qui autem fornicatur, in corpus suum peccat. An nescitis quoniam membra vestra templum sunt Spiritus Sancti, qui in vobis est, quem habetis a Deo, et non vestis vestri? Empti enim estis pretio magno. Glorificate et portate Deum in corpore vestro."**[3]

The abbot's twin sins of fornication and attempting to trade in God's grace are similar to Rainier's, only worse. Whereas Damian has merely implied Rainier's spiritual condition, for the sins of the abbot he uses two technical expressions that, although now seemingly circumlocutory, were then quite direct and damning.[4] Indeed, although the simoniac is not explicitly identified as an agent of the devil until the end of the chapter, Damian's use of the term **miles Christi** for Romuald as he goes to confront him suggests already this status; for the three occasions on which this term has previously been applied

(in chapters 7, 16 and 18) have been the two when Romuald has been attacked directly by demons and the one when the devil, having been defeated in these attacks, has used the iniquitous monks of Bagno to abuse the saint with the purpose of tempting him to care for only his own salvation. For the rest of the chapter the abbot acts and is responded to as if he is indeed a demon rather than a man:

(ii) The abbot attempts to strangle him.

> Now while that reprobate of a man was afraid of losing the abbacy, he had no fear of committing murder. And so, in the dead of night, as Romuald rested free of care in bed, [the abbot] secretly attacked him and began to grip his throat between his impious fingers, cruelly agleam to suffocate him. But as the sainted man rasped[5] - his windpipe not yet wholly blocked - as he struggled scarcely to wheeze, Engelbert was at that very moment roused by [his] master's gasps. He at once seized a firebrand from the slumbering fire and drove off the devil's minister from his attempt at a most heinous crime.

Here Damian returns to symbolic language similar to that of chapter 10. For if these sentences be taken literally, Engelbert has just "rescued" Romuald from a martyr's crown, a point which it hardly seems to be Damian's intention to make. Moreover, the story with which the chapter began - Romuald's attempt to depose the evil abbot - has been abandoned incomplete; if the abbot remained in office and Romuald accepted that his mission had failed, as Damian's silence on the aftermath of the attack might suggest, then the devil, although defeated in the night-time, is victorious over the saint in the major battle. There is no edification in this narrative. Several conventional symbols, however, are imbedded in it.

The central symbol, the **spiramen**, etymologically related to **spiritus** in its original sense of "breath", again represents the spiritual channel of life from God as it has in the story of the choked evil

count of chapter 10. The untroubled rest in bed in the night-time is again contemplation, as it has been in chapter 22.[6] The life that Romuald is in danger of losing, therefore, is not mere earthly existence but the eternal life of which contemplation is the foretaste. This cannot be taken from him by any purely physical attack. Spiritually, he is threatened by the abbot because he is together in the same monastery with him. Although he has staved off a like danger from secular Rainier in the previous chapter, he is now associated with the sinfulness of an unrepentant reprobate of a monk.

As for Rainier, Damian has indicated that the association would come through acceptance of physical patronage. There is no equivalent explanation of how the association would operate inside Sant' Apollinare, but the spiritual collectivity of religious communities has been assumed throughout the **Life.** Right from Chapter 3, where the brethren have plotted together to murder him, Romuald has had to leave one coenobitic community after another because it will not, or cannot, conform to his exceptional standard and he cannot "return into Egypt" by conforming instead to brethren who are further from God than he is. Instead he has withdrawn repeatedly to the desert places and "**ibi denique ... multis fratribus aggregatis et per cellas singulas constitutis ... fervore heremitice conversationis rigorem et in se et in aliis tenuit.**"[7] One of his disciples is now able to rekindle the fire of their own unworldliness against the new threat[8], but if he had been alone in the simoniacal house Romuald would have been destroyed. Participation with them is not the way to reform sinners. Damian has just shown how Romuald had a salutary effect on a secular nobleman from whom he had to distance himself to do so. In the next two chapters the saint will re-establish his eremitical **conversatio** at Parenzo and then return to Italy to bear new fruit by once again

drawing converts from the world into a spiritual estate that the evil of simony will be shown to be unable to penetrate.

Damian's sources

This latter of the two sections is in fact so thoroughly allegorised that if the symbolic details were removed, virtually nothing would remain except the detail that Engelbert was present. Even the unnamed **minister diaboli** appears more as a cut-out figure than a real individual in this section. The desire to kill the reformer has been the first reaction of the simoniacal clerks of Chapter 35 also, although nothing has there come of it. Since Chapter 3 the intensity of persecution Romuald has suffered at the hands of those he would save has been a measure of their depravity; this abbot is the most depraved. It is therefore likely that this section, at least in its present form, is Damian's own comment on the significance of Romuald's stay in the simoniac's house.

The first sentence, on the other hand, in which the fornicating Venetian simoniac is introduced, must be based in some kind of literal oral reminiscence to be true in any sense. It is so brief a summary, however, so vague in time and so anonymous that the original form and content of the story Damian heard about this abbot are no longer at all apparent. Indeed, if the attached story of the attempted murder is not literally true, then the ill fame of this abbot of Romuald's home community need not originally have been remembered in any particular connection with Romuald's name; the reminiscence could even be of a prelate who was really before his time (and before St. Maieul's reform of Sant 'Apollinare[9]).

Romuald again fails with a simoniac; a simoniac, moreover, scandalous for another sin as well.[10] As with chapter 35, the reader may question whether Damian has convincingly established that Romuald really concerned himself as greatly with simony as the hagiographer might have wished.

NOTES

1. Per coemptionem symoniace hereseos.
2. In corpus suum peccabat.
3. 1st **Corinthians** 6:18-20.
4. On simoniaca heresis, cf. c.35 n.26.
5. Rauciret.
6. On rest cf. also c.1 n.12.
7. C. 26.
8. Cf. c.43 below, where Romuald, drawing men from the world, will be characterised as inflaming their hearts to heavenly longing as though himself wholly converted into fire.
9. Cf. c.2 n.23.
10. On Damian's later concern about clerical incontinence, which hardly appears in the VR, cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien** pp. 69-70.

CHAPTER 42 HE IS RECALLED FROM PARENZO ON ROMAN AUTHORITY

This very short chapter may be divided into two: (i) the first sentence, in which Romuald returns to Parenzo but is recalled by Rome; (ii) the other two sentences, in which Damian explains and comments on this. His argument is quite straightforward throughout.

(i) Romuald returns to Parenzo but is not permitted to remain there.

> After this, Romuald sailed again to Parenzo, but the bishop[1] of the apostolic see and the Roman citizens sent a legation for his return.

(ii) Italy earns his presence by her devotion.

> They promised that if he came back they would follow his precepts; if not, however, they threatened the sentence of excommunication. And so in this way the nursling Italy merited the recovery of her Romuald.

Damian's sources

It is most unlikely that Romuald was recalled from Istria by pope and Roman populace simply to be again on the Italian peninsula, and yet there is no apparent connection between this recall and what he goes on to do in the next chapter. The latter half of the opening sentence seems in fact to be the beginning of a story or section of a story from which it has been displaced. This story cannot be reconstructed from such extremely slight evidence, but there is one place in the **Life** where such an introduction would easily fit. For the only occasion on which Romuald has had any contact with the papacy has been on his receipt of a licence to go to Hungary in chapter 39, there described as initiated by himself in response to Bruno of Querfurt's martyrdom. It seems likely that the stories of the return from

parenzo at papal request and the journey to Pannonia with papal permission were originally more closely related than they are in the **Life.** Such a contention may be reinforced by the participation of the **Romani cives** in the commanded return. For there is no other evidence that Romuald had any popular or local noble following in Rome, it is most particularly unlikely that the Romans would require his return from seclusion in Istria only to remain in seclusion in the north, and the weak claim that pope and citizenry promised to obey all Romuald's precepts henceforth is simply ignored by Damian for the rest of the work. If Romuald in fact went to Pannonia to collect the noble German converts with whom he returned and whose **conversatio** he thereafter apparently oversaw for some time near Orvieto, then the civil Romans' interest in the papal legation may have been in some way connected with a political question involving the exiled German duke subsequently forgotten by monks who did not share the interest.

As suggested above, the claim that Romuald's instructions were required in Rome appears to be an attempt by Damian to explain this introduction that no longer has a narrative. It perhaps also serves to explain in advance the apparently high-handed manner in which Romuald will issue instructions to an unnamed priest and monk at Monte Pietralata - far from Rome as that is - in the next chapter. The final comment that Italy thus deserved Romuald back is even more plainly editorial.

Literal historicity

If Damian's source material for this chapter can only be speculated on, what actually lay behind it seems quite beyond recall.

NOTES

1. Antistes.

CHAPTER 43 A MONK'S DWELLING FOR WHICH ROMUALD HAS GONE SURETY IS PROTECTED FROM A THIEF

Four historiographical divisions may be made here: (i) the first sentence (to p.85 1.1), which locates what is to follow; (ii) the second sentence (to p.85 1.5), in which Romuald again makes converts widely; (iii) the remainder of the chapter except for the last sentence, in which a monk's dwelling is divinely protected from theft in Romuald's absence; (iv) the last sentence, in which Damian comments on this.

Damian's argument

The opening two sections are straightforward:

(i) Romuald dwells at Cagli and Monte Pietralata.

> And so he stayed at that time in a gorge of the mountains of Cagli for some while, then departed to Monte Pietralata, not far, that is, from St. Vincent's monastery, which is situated by the Candigliano River.

(ii) He is quite fired up to save.

> And wherever the sainted man went, always bearing fruit, always heaping up profit in souls more and more and drawing men from the world, he inflamed the hearts[1] of men to heavenly longing as though he were wholly converted into fire.

(iii) His promise protects a monk's house from theft.

> Now as he wanted then to find a place suitable to be made into a hermitage, he instructed a certain priest to return to his own house and fetch food for him and those who were accompanying[2] him. Then he surveyed the mountain, keenly circling right round it[3] and coming at length upon a certain monk who was living by a small church.[4] He immediately demanded of the monk that he go on with him and show him a place where water might be found. The monk strongly objected that he could not leave his house unguarded because he feared an attack by thieves, who lay in

> wait. To this, Romuald replied that he would compensate him for everything if such a thing should happen. And thus become the debtor for someone else's injury, he led the monk [away] with him. And so, while they were seeking out the place, lo, the priest, bringing the lunch as he had been ordered, came upon a robber already breaking into the house. Having discovered the man, he caught him and guarded him captive until Romuald's return. When Romuald found him, he first undertook to rebuke him, piously severe in what he said, and then admonishing him sweetly, permitted him to return home unharmed.

Once again Damian tells a story that raises difficulties as a narrative. For Romuald sends the priest away to get the food **before** he comes across the monk by the church and yet the priest takes it to that place and waits for Romuald there. Furthermore, Romuald initially asks the monk to take him to water, but in the event apparently takes over the leader's role himself (**"monachum secum duxit"**), after which the two are presented not as going directly and confidently to the source but as **looking for** it (**"illis locum querentibus"**), as though the monk has been living on the mountain without knowing exactly how to go there; and what they may have found is not described, as water sources often are in hagiography and have been, for example, in chapter 35's description of Val di Castro. As with previous difficult narratives, however, the story is encrusted with symbols.

The term **latrones** has already been used in chapter 35 to characterise simoniacs and the general secularity they represent, after which Chapter 36 has developed a story about a thief at Val di Castro who has also apparently symbolised simony. After the reintroduction of simony in the story of the attempted murder at Sant 'Apollinare in chapter 41, this new thief now appears. He too is therefore likely to stand representative of simony and secularity. The monk dwelling by the **basilica** is probably also a representative figure. He is evidently alone there but Damian does not call him **eremita** or

anachoreta but simply **monachus**, and his habitation not a **cella** but simply a **domus**, like that to which the priest goes to collect the food. He is not a true hermit because he clings to what he has. What this may be is not stated but as no sermon on storing up treasures in Heaven rather than on earth is preached and as Romuald insures him for all risk it is not likely that it is worldly wealth that Damian has in mind. The monk is like the timid servant of the "Parable of the Talents", who buries what has been entrusted to him rather than put it at any risk.[5] The saint, looking to found a (group) hermitage, requires the monk's service as a guide to the source of life-giving water on his particular mountain - which perhaps symbolises the **virtus** of Christ welling up within him[6], which Romuald wants to tap for his foundation - but the man is reluctant to relax his self-defensiveness and entrust himself to the saint for fear that this will lay him open to the depredations represented by the thief; indeed so committed to the negative self-attention of preserving what he already has that he is evidently not accustomed to resorting to the source of life concerned and Romuald must help him look for it. Damian has just shown in chapter 41 how grippingly simony can invade a **coenobium** and with what peril to one seeking contemplation there. This monk represents those religious who, erring to the other side, might fear that such peril could befall them even in the eremitism to which Romuald would lead them, clinging to self-reliance as the only defence. In the end, however, he accepts Romuald as his security and is proven right; although the saint is with him seeking out the fountain, divine providence looks after what is in danger through the priest who is already engaged in the saint's service, and the feared thief is apprehended and sent away chastened by Romualdine doctrine without having done any harm.

Damian completes the chapter with a more explicit statement:

(iv) Divine providence thus safeguards the unprotected.

> In this way, there is no doubt, in this way did divine providence preserve undamaged what in Romuald's absence had been abandoned without guard.

Divine providence did not intervene merely because a saint happened to be present; on the contrary, he was absent, which presumably means that such protection has not ended with his death. This sentence also ensures that attention is not distracted from this main point of the chapter to the manner of such a thief's correction, which has already been dealt with in chapter 36.

Damian's sources

The four sections appear to be of four distinct kinds, although three of them are quite simple.

The first, giving the geographical details, is an unelaborated record of two probable historical facts, which Damian would have heard at the monastery of San Vincenzo that he mentions, where he probably was at the time of writing.[7]

The second, briefly describing Romuald's assiduity in conversion work in terms of fire, is an interpretive generalising summary not necessarily related to the rest of the chapter. It is similar to part of chapter 35.

The fourth section is a summary of this particular chapter.

The third section, the story of the intercepted thief that constitutes the bulk of the chapter, is more complex. As it stands, it is highly allegorised, but the account of the correction of the thief with which it ends is not an essential part of the allegory and is clearly similar to the ending of chapter 36. As in that earlier case, it appears that Damian has taken the shell of a story originally told about Romuald's treatment of a thief and adapted it to make his own point. As suggested in relation to chapter 36, this second story of a thief's correction may be a second use of the same story, a second version of it from another source or a story of a second thief. As Damian is definite in his geography in the two chapters, the setting of chapter 36 being Val di Castro and this latter's Monte Pietralata, the first of these possibilities seems the least likely. As brigandage was a common problem, a single story of the saint's exemplary response could have become localised in two places, or Romuald may indeed have acted in the same way more than once.

Literal historicity

In either case, it is probable, as argued in relation to chapter 36, that such a response to thieves is authentic to Romuald's spirituality.

NOTES

1. Animi.
2. Or "attending"; comitabuntur.
3. Indagine studiosa; more literally, "with a keen ring" (of huntsmen, nets, troops, etc.). Cf. OLD.
4. Basilica.
5. **Matthew** 25:14-30.
6. On the gift of Christ as a spring or well within the Christian, cf. **John** 4:14; also **Proverbs** 18:4.
7. Cf. the introduction, "Author, place and date".

CHAPTER 44 HE SENDS A BROTHER TO INTERCEPT OTHER THIEVES

This shorter chapter may be divided in two: (i) the first two sentences (to p.86 l.7), which contain the story; (ii) the final sentence in which Damian adds his comment.

Damian's argument

(i) A brother is sent to protect a distant package.

> Again, while he was in that same area building cells - now there was a package[1] stored[2] under a rock some distance from these - during this time, the venerable man rushed a certain brother off there as though on some impulse, ordering him to hurry very anxiously. The brother immediately came upon robbers, and indeed found them already trying to steal, but he ascertained that nothing was yet missing from the things that had been stored there.

This new story of intercepted thieves is disturbed by no narrative hiccups like those of its predecessor and to this extent is acceptable as a purely literal account. It is, however, decidedly incomplete. For what transpires between the robbers and the brother who uncovers them and what subsequently happens to the evildoers is left unstated. The thief of chapter 36, as well as that of chapter 43, has been apprehended and preached to, those who have martyred John and Benedict in chapter 28 have been apprehended and then miraculously released from their bondage, and the rapacious count of chapter 10 has choked on the flesh of the stolen cow, but these new thieves simply vanish from the story as soon as they are found out. Furthermore, the end to which divine revelation is here active is apparently trivial, or even materialistic; for the saint rouses one of his disciples to anxiety - the antithesis of the peace and rest of contemplation - over a mere bundle of unspecified contents. Once again the story makes fuller sense as an allegory.

The human body is commonly represented in hagiography as a **sarcina**, a burden that is left behind at the time of earthly death.[3] The body of Lazarus was stored beneath a rock for the period between his death and his resuscitation by Christ[4] (which prefigured His own Resurrection and the more permanent resurrection of the bodies of the saved to which that is to lead). Romuald has been building cells - edifying contemplative hearts. In chapter 36, and again just now in chapter 43, divine power has protected his followers against the depredations of simony, a heresy which directly threatens these heart-cells. Damian is apparently turning now to prove that bodies are similarly protected.

It does not seem likely that the **sarcina** is a literal corpse. In that case the crime would be the theft of relics by literal thieves and there is no apparent reason why the story could not be told purely literally. The **sarcina** is therefore probably a "mortified" body, "left aside", "buried", "stored up" for future transformation - **reposita** - in the religious metaphorical sense and attacked by thieves who, like those of the previous chapter, are demonic temptations. Divine providence does not allow this kind of loss to a community of Romuald's either; the master is prompted to saving intervention at the very moment of danger:

(ii) It is by divine revelation that he is able to do this.

> From this it is rightly inferred that it was not without the prompting of divine revelation that the blessed man sent the brother with such disquiet. For he was himself pricked by the fact that robbers happened to have reached the unguarded property.

Once again, although Romuald is physically present in the story, he does not go to the defence of the common property himself but sends

one of the brethren. His physical presence is therefore not the point but rather his **virtus** to secure his community, and there is nothing to prevent the same system of common defence from continuing to work for his disciples after his transition to Heaven, or when the master of the hermitage is at a distance from his charges and devoting his attention to contemplation.

Damian's sources

The story in the first section, as suggested above, is acceptable as a literal narrative except that it is evidently incomplete. It is possible, therefore, that it is a highly edited fragment of yet another story of attempted theft. Alternatively, as all the details are significant and relevant, it is pure allegory. The final sentence is openly editorial.

Literal historicity

Unless this story is accepted as a literal miracle, there is nothing to be learnt from it as it now appears except Damian's own theory.

NOTES

1. Sarcina.
2. Reposita.
3. In the words of Bultot, op.cit., pp. 22-3, "Pierre Damien repète frequemment, avec l'une ou l'autre variante, cette phrase: "corporis deposuit sarcinam, mox immortalitatis indutus est stolam".
4. **John** 11:38-39

CHAPTER 45 HE IS EXPELLED FROM VAL DI CASTRO

Four divisions may be made here: (i) the first two sentences (to p.86 1.16), in which Romuald counsels the abbot of Val di Castro to live withdrawn from the brethren; (ii) the third sentence (to p.86 1.20), in which it is claimed that Romuald loathed the office of abbot; (iii) the fourth sentence (to p.87 1.2), in which the abbot has Romuald's cell-building materials destroyed; (iv) the last sentence, in which Romuald is likened to a cedar of Paradise.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald counsels the abbot of Val di Castro on the spiritual life.

> After this, Romuald returned to the monastery of Val di Castro, and thereupon urged the abbot to rule others in such a way that he should not on that account neglect himself to any degree. He wished, over and above this, that he would not, because of[1] his rule, desert to any extent the cell that he had occupied, but that he would live spiritually it, [looking to] himself, and visit the brethren, for the sake[2] of admonition, only on special festivals.

The former of these precepts is unremarkable, the latter a radical interpretation of it. As noted in relation to chapter 23, where Romuald has renounced his own abbacy at Sant 'Apollinare, Benedict prescribed a care on the abbot's part for the souls of the brethren that would be charged by constant awareness of the account God would demand of the shepherd for his sheep, and saw in this - as the abbot could not succeed with the brethren unless he was himself a fitting example to them - the guarantee of the shepherd's care for the state of his own soul.[3] Throughout this **Life**, on the other hand, especially since Romuald's defeat of the devil in open combat in chapter 17, monks have been to the saint like agents of the demons, as tempters.

Less advanced in the holy **conversatio**, they threaten to drag the saint back in his piety and to distract his mind from the worshipful contemplation of God that is the highest vocation and anticipation of eternity. This eremitical abbot, therefore, like the one at Pereo before him (in chapter 30), must live in contemplative seclusion and must only intermittently visit the brethren with the grace of his doctrine from the desert place (this one apparently keeping to even stricter seclusion than his Pereo forerunner, who was allowed to visit his charges weekly on sundays). Not to live this way is to fail to care adequately for the state of his own soul.

This strictly eremitical interpretation of abbacy applied to those **coenobia** that were founded by hermitages to cater for converts from the world incapable of the eremitical **conversatio** themselves and therefore subordinate to the hermits.[4] For any of the hermits to revert to normal abbacy to care for them was equivalent to returning to the world:

(ii) He is believed to have equated abbacy with worldly power.

> For the conversation of abbots, such as it was, was so odious to the blessed man that we perceive that he would rejoice no less if he was able to tear an abbacy from someone's hand than if it was given to him to call anyone very powerful in the world to the order of the holy conversation.

(iii) The abbot schemes to destroy Romuald's cell-building materials.

> But just as it is said by Solomon: "Like vinegar in nitre is he who sings songs to a perverse heart",[5] so [the abbot] was rendered from bad to worse by the venerable man's preaching. He went at once to the countesses who were the mistresses of the place, and, sacrilegious in his ruse, suggested that they should order the wood from which Romuald's cells ought to be built, to be cut into pieces.

The key concept in this passage is that of the **cor perversum** in the Scriptural quotation; he who is not **conversus** - turned to grow towards God - is **perversus.** Just as the brethren under Romuald's own abbacy in chapters 22 and 23 have been **"in deteriora converti"** (an ironic turn of phrase) by the stringent requirements of the holy man, so the abbot of Val di Castro is made worse by the demand that he rule from his cell, evidenced by his act to prevent Romuald from establishing eremitical cells in his place. By so doing he undoes Romuald's major work, for the cell-building materials he has destroyed may be understood as symbolic of the hearts of converts not edified to eremitical contemplation. Romuald forces a choice between coenobitism subordinate to eremitism and coenobitism sufficient to itself. Damian closes the chapter with a comment on the significance of the abbot's choice of the latter:

(iv) The cedar of Paradise is thus ejected.

> And so in this way was the tall cedar of Paradise ejected from the woods of earthly men.

This sentence derives its significance from **Isaiah** 37:23-24:

> **Cui exprobasti et quem blasphemasti?** [etc.] ... **Contra Sanctum Israel! In manu servorum tuorum exprobasti Domino et dixisti: "In multitudine quadrigarum mearum ego ascendi altitudinem montium ... et succidi excelsa cedrorum eius ...**

Thus, by the abbot's action, Val di Castro, which in chapter 35 has been a restored Paradise in the making, is set against God and reduced to a forest of earthly men. It should not be too lightly assumed, however, that Damian means by this that all the good achieved by Romuald there in his attraction of many to penitence and conversion, in the giving to the poor to which he has roused them, in his saving of simoniacs and in other such notable ways, is undone completely. As

with his entry to the holy house of Sant 'Apollinare when called by St. Apollinaris himself and his subsequent first departure from that evil community following its murder "plot" against him (chapters 2 to 4), each chapter about Val di Castro may be built on a radical contrast independently. Thus, insofar as Val di Castro is a place of conversions from the world, it is a fertile field where Romuald bears bountiful spiritual fruit; insofar as its devotion to eremitism is limited, it is still in the fallen world and incompatible with the uncompromised sanctity of a Romuald. And so he is cast out of the religious community he has himself gathered, no doubt after the model of the ejection from the world of men of the principal antitype of the cedar tree, the Holy One of Israel, Christ Himself.

Damian's sources

This chapter appears to be based on little historical knowledge and considerable interpretation.

The first section, in which Romuald counsels the abbot to live eremitically, and the third, in which this only provokes him to have the wood cut up, apparently purport to be historical narrative. In the first of these, however, Damian shows no sign of knowing who the abbot was, how he came into the office (Romuald has appointed no abbot in chapter 35), what his initial reaction to Romuald was, whether Romuald himself again dwelt in a cell there for this visit and how long he stayed, or any other historical detail. Beyond the barest historical point that he returned to this place, the section contains nothing but a general point of eremitical doctrine not necessarily originally associated with any particular abbot or place. In the third section, similarly, none of the countesses is named, nor is any

reason offered for their acceptance of the abbot's request or for his going to them instead of to their husbands, nor is any other historical question answered. The section is composed of one self-explanatory quotation from **Proverbs**, the approach to the countesses and the highly symbolic destruction of the wood. The second of these is perhaps included because it is in conjunction with the counts of the place that Romuald has initially gone to Val di Castro and borne bountiful fruit there and it is not Damian's intention now to associate **them** in the abbot's treachery; or possibly, given the Paradise imagery, through some kind of association between the countesses and Eve, with the abbot in the role of the devil-serpent. In either case, the established "fact" that the counts were Romuald's patrons could have led Damian to deduce that the abbot had had to work through the countesses. As for the destruction of the wood, this can be said to be true if it is symbolically true. If it is a remnant of an oral story, there is no sign left of what this might have been. There is in fact no clear sign of any pre-existing story in these first and third sections. Damian could have deduced all the material from knowing only that Romuald had been involved (with lay patrons) in the origins of Val di Castro and yet that that place had become primarily coenobitic - which the master, as understood by his hagiographer, could not possibly have intended.

The second and last sections are straightforwardly editorial. The second, recording Romuald's loathing of abbacy, is given away by the admission "**cernimus**", while the image of Romuald as cedar is Biblical, as noted above.

Literal historicity

It may well be true that Romuald preferred the abbots of **coenobia** subordinate to hermitages to live eremitically. It may also be true that he was sometimes disappointed in the results of such counsel.[6] The more particular claims of this chapter, however, cannot be considered proven.

NOTES

1. Occasione; either "reason" or "pretext"; cf. c.40 n.1.
2. Gratia; connotations of "with the grace of".
3. **Ben. Reg.** c.2; also c.64.
4. Cf. c.30 n.3. above.
5. **Proverbs** 25:20.
6. Cf. c.30 above.

CHAPTER 46 ROMUALD CURES A TOOTH-ACHE

This chapter appears to be composed of one main reminiscence, briefly introduced and commented on. It may therefore be divided into three: (i) the first sentence (to p.87 1.6), which sets the scene; (ii) the remainder of the chapter except for the last two sentences (to p.88 1.15), in which the symbolic story is related: (iii) the last two sentences, explaining why Romuald did not know this story was told of him.

Damian's argument

The opening sentence is straightforwardly introductory:

(i) He removes to Aquabella.

> And moving on from there, he decided to stay not far from Monte Appennino in a place[1] which is called Aquabella.

(ii) An inhibiting tooth-ache is cured on his counsel.

> Now, as certain laymen were building dwelling-houses there with his disciples, but Romuald was alone looking after the guest-house because he was already unable to work on account of his age, a certain priest felt an unbearable pain in the teeth, reluctantly left off the building work and, having requested permission from the brethren, began to return home, moaning miserably. And since in going back, he had to go over by Romuald, [he was] asked why he was going away [and] thereupon informed [Romuald] of the suffering that had befallen [him]. [The priest] opening [his mouth], Romuald touched his finger to the place where he was suffering and said, "Put a red hot[2] awl into a reed[3], so that it will not injure [your] lip, and place it here. This way the pain will go away." The priest went on barely more than the length of one **iugerum**[4] and [then], at once relieved of all pain, went back safe and sound to the work he had left, crying aloud in fact in a clear voice, "We give Thee thanks, almighty God, Who has deigned to brighten our region with the brilliance of such a star. Truly an angel of God[5], truly a holy prophet and a great light hidden from the world has appeared in our region.

"Dens putridus", according to **Proverbs, "et pes lassus, qui sperat super infideli in die angustiae ..."[6] As this verse immediately precedes the saying of Solomon about the perverse heart that Damian has cited in relation to the abbot of Val di Castro in the previous chapter, it is probable that he had it in mind when he wrote these sentences. Who the **infidelis** might be in the present case is not clear - perhaps it is the priest himself - but it seems plain enough that Romuald is the **fidelis** in whom his hope is, on the contrary, rewarded.

The circumstances of the cure are instructive. As eremitical cells repeatedly symbolise the contemplative heart, the inability of this secular priest to persevere in the construction of monastic dwellings through to their completion probably represents the limitation of his important category of Christians in spiritual edification without a **fidelis** master of the holy **conversatio** in whom to put their trust. The consequence of this frailty is a **"transitus reversionis"**, a phrase suggesting failure and even desertion. It is a cause of great suffering to the priest. Romuald is able to effect the cure.

In Damian's narrative, it is not perfectly clear just how Romuald does so. For the recommended deadening of the nerve by the application of a red-hot piece of metal does not appear in the event to be necessary; the cure follows the mere receipt of the prescription after the touching by the saintly finger. Damian, however, does not explain this and the great detail he gives of the prescription indicates that it is not only the finger that is significant. As in previous chapters, allegory probably explains the narrative hiccup.

The finger of God, from which the miraculous finger of Romuald must

derive its **virtus**, is symbolic, in both Old and New Testaments, of the power of God, the Holy Spirit.[7] It is by this finger that the miracles were worked that freed Israel from bondage in Egypt[8], that the Ten Commandments were written on the tablets of stone[9] and that Jesus cast out demons.[10] This **virtus** of the Spirit becomes effective for the distressed priest when he puts his trust in Romuald's prescription.

The prescription is allegorically directly relevant to a secular servant of God. As St. Gregory the Great had interpreted the awl of **Exodus** and **Deuteronomy** (it does not appear anywhere else in the Bible):

> "**Sed offerat eum** [a slave who does not want to leave his lord's service] **dominus diis, et applicetur ad ostium et postes, et perforet aurem eius subula, ut sit ei servus in saeculum.**"[11] **Is enim qui in activa disposuit vita perdurare, a domino diis offertur, quando a praedicatore suo antiquorum patrum dictis imbuitur, qui nobis in via omnipotentis Domini sacerdotes fuerunt. Atque ad ostium et postes tabernaculi ducitur, ut de ingressu caelestis habitaculi altius aliquid audiat, et tremendi iudicii diem subtiliter agnoscat, ne per bona opera quae facit placere hominibus appetat. Sicque auris eius subula perforatur, dum illius timoris Dei subtilitate percutitur, ut, verbi acumine transfixa, per omne quod agit noverit ingressum regni semper attendere, et quasi ab ostio et poste tabernaculi perforatam aurem portare.**[12]

The awl thus signifies that "sharp point" of the word of God that holds a Christian in bondage through dread awareness of the judgment that is coming with His kingdom.

In the present case it is to be **ignita**, perhaps partly because heat is necessary in the narrative cure of the literal tooth, but probably also to indicate that the priest's righteous fear is to be fired by the Spirit Himself, Who has been represented by various images of fire repeatedly in the **Life.**

This fiery heat will be prevented from causing any harm by a calamus reed. St. Ambrose had explained the calamus thus:

> **Tamen hanc harundinem** [a reed of the kind "shaken by the wind"[13]] **si quis de terrae vellat plantariis et superfluis exuat, exspolians se veterem hominem cum actibus eius et scribae velociter scribentis manu temperet, incipit non harundo esse, sed calamus, qui praecepta caelestium scripturarum penetralibus mentis imprimat, tabulis cordis inscribat. De quo calamo habes dictum: "lingua mea calamus scribae velociter scribentis,"[14] quod ad Christum referre alii volunt. Uno igitur loco et verbum et calamus legitur et scriba: verbum, quia de genitali patris processit arcano - "eructuavit cor meum verbum bonum"[15] - calamus, quia caro Christi paternae seriem voluntatis expressit et linguae mandata divinae sacri effusione cruoris implevit, scriba, quia calamo suo individua quadam distinctione novi et veteris testamenti vel divinitatis et carnis paternae nobis dispositionis mysteria revelavit. Hunc calamum imitare tuae carnis temperamento, hunc calamum tuum, hoc est carnem tuam, tingue non atramento, sed spiritu dei vivi, ut quod scribis aeternum sit. Tali calamo Paulus illam epistulam scripsit, de qua dicit: "epistula nostra vos estis, scripta non atramento, sed spiritu dei vivi".[16]**

The spiritual heat of the awl of the present chapter is thus to be absorbed by the **calamus**, except at the point where it is applied to the bad tooth itself; the priest's burning fear of judgment is to be sublimated in his conduct of his fleshly life such that he becomes an incarnate message of praise and revelation. This will protect his lip.

The lip is the organ by which the priest preaches. **"Labia enim sacerdotis"**, records Malachi, **"custodiunt scientiam, et legem requirunt ex ore eius, quia angelus Domini exercituum est".**[17] **"Per ipsum ergo offeramus hostiam laudis semper Deo"**, exhorts Hebrews, **"id est fructum labiorum confitentium nomini eius".**[18].

The priest's first message and sacrifice of praise upon his healing by Romuald is that that saint is God's special messenger to his region.[19]

(iii) His disciples must keep praise of him from his ears.

> Shouting out these and many other things in God's praise, he could scarcely be constrained by the blessed man's disciples to be silent. For if such words should reach Romuald's ears in any way at all, they would strike his heart[20] with the severest vexation.

Damian has informed the reader as early as the prologue that Romuald always strove to keep his miracles secret, to protect himself against vainglory.

Damian's sources

The opening sentence, setting the scene at Aquabella, is a minimal record that Romuald sojourned in a place of that name. It is one of the many allusions made by Damian to sites about which he either knew or cared very little. He evidently believed that what follows in this chapter took place at Aquabella, but the story he tells shows no necessary connection with any particular place.

The status of the healing story itself is quite unclear. As tooth-aches were a very common problem it is probable enough that Romuald was consulted about them on numerous occasions, and the rough treatment by red-hot metal was effective enough to remain in use until modern times.[21] This "cure", however, is so basic that it certainly does not require a prophet of God to prescribe it - indeed the priest's praises would be ludicrous if the cure had been effected by his following the prescription - and Damian's version is in fact so thoroughly allegorised that very little of purely narrative significance remains. Damian, who has dealt with Romuald's **magisterium** over one category of Christians after another, probably wanted to show his model hermit as prophet also to non-simoniacal

secular clergy, who have not hitherto been dealt with, and it seems that he has here developed some very slight reminiscence in order to do so.

The statement in the concluding sentences that the saint's disciples suppressed this beneficiary's praises is perhaps a masked admission that this story was almost unheard of or had not hitherto been interpreted as miraculous.

Literal historicity

As Tabacco notes, it is not certain where Damian understood Aquabella to be. It is not improbable that Romuald counselled disciples on easing tooth-aches or that he disliked effusive praise.

NOTES

1. Or, "the place".
2. Ignita.
3. Calamus.
4. One day's ploughing.
5. Robert Bultot has pointed out that the ancient doctrine that man was created to replace the fallen angels is the basis of Damian's anthropology. Contemplative Romuald has evidently regained the angelic status lost in the Fall of Man. Cf. Bultot, **Christianisme et valeurs humaines, A. - La doctrine du mepris du monde en Occident, de S. Ambroise a Innocent III, tome 4, Le XI^{e} siecle, vol. 1, Pierre Damien** (Louvain & Paris, 1963), pp. 17-18.
6. **Proverbs** 25:19.
7. Bruno of Querfurt records of Romuald, "semper tamen discipulos congregat in digito Dei". Vfr. c.2, p.718. Cf. Leclercq, **Romuald missionaire**, p.311, and also "Le doigt de Dieu", in La vie spirituelle, vol. 78 (1948), pp. 492-507.
8. **Exodus** 8:19.
9. **Exodus** 31:18.
10. **Luke** 11:20.
11. **Exodus** 21:6. Cf. **Deuteronomy** 15:17.
12. **Homilia III**, 12-13, CCSL, CXLII, pp. 40-41.
13. **Luke** 7:24.
14. **Psalm** 44:2 (Modern numbering 45:1).
15. Ibid.
16. 2nd **Corinthians** 3:3; Ambrose, **Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam**, V, CCSL XIV, pp. 105-106.
17. **Malachi** 2:7.

18. **Hebrews** 13:15. Cf. also **Isaiah** 57:19: "Credo fructum labiorum pacem; pacem ei, qui longe est et qui prope, dixit Dominus, et sanabo eum."
19. The imagery is reminiscent of some New Testament descriptions of Christ: e.g. **John** 1:9-10 and 2nd **Corinthians** 4:4.
20. Cor.
21. Cf. Dame Alexandra Hasluck, **Portrait in a Mirror: An Autobiography** (Melbourne, about 1978), p.5.

CHAPTER 47 A TREE IS MIRACULOUSLY AVERTED FROM FALLING ON HIS CELL

A single story makes up this chapter:

> And at another time, he ordered that a particular large beech tree which stood close to his cell be cut down. The beech, however, leant over and menaced the cell in such a way that, according to human opinion, if it were cut down it would undoubtedly crush the whole building.[1] The workmen being willing to carry out their orders but terrified of the tree's falling, [Romuald] insisted that they should have no fear at all. And so when axes had been laid to all round and it came at last to the very inmost part of the tree, this now unquestionably threatened [to] crash[2] onto the blessed man, and everyone began to call and, [raising their] voices [to] a clamour, to urge [on him] vehemently that if he would think less of his cell and leave it, he could preserve himself. [Romuald], however, [did] not rest[3] at all on [what] they clamoured, but decisively ordered that they should quickly carry out what they had begun. [When] the beech at last fell, with a sound [that was] very deep, it was thrown, by divine power[4], in another direction, in such a way that the cell, to the amazement of all, remained altogether unharmed. And so, astounded by so great a miracle, they all raised joyful voices to Heaven and returned endless thanks to God.

Damian's argument

Unlike its predecessor, this chapter shows no narrative hiccup and it can therefore be more convincingly interpreted as a straightforward miracle story. It may or may not be significant in this regard that Damian uses the word **miraculum** here, which he did not in the previous chapter. It is nonetheless out of harmony with the rest of the **Life**, however, if it is read **only** as a miracle story. For Romuald is clearly aware from the beginning that the miracle will occur and be seen by all the workmen involved; it is virtually a case of "I told you so". But no reason why the tree should be cut down is given; the beginning of the story implies that it only becomes dangerous because of the cutting. This leaves the miracle as an apparently deliberate act of pure thaumaturgy, standing in direct opposition to the claims of the prologue and the preceding chapter that Romuald endeavoured to

conceal his wonders and was gravely disturbed if he learnt they were spoken of. Once again an explanation can be found in significant details.

It is not until Chapter 61 that Damian mentions beech wood as a cell-building material but it has already been established that Romuald's cells were wooden and Damian may in any case have expected his readers to know this.[5] It is probably to be assumed, therefore, that the tree was being filled for cell-building purposes. It was at any rate part of a hermitage development. This threatens the **edificium** of Romuald's own cell - his own contemplative heart that has already been edified. Damian has just dealt with the problems encountered by a secular priest in edifying such cells. He has earlier dealt with the dangers of abbacy, the particular inappropriateness of such office to Romuald, and the temptation to "singularity" - care only for the self. He now turns to the spiritual danger that still threatens Romuald as a master of the eremitical **conversatio** - that even hermitage-building threatens its integrity. The danger may be taken literally - the supervision of construction works is not readily compatible with reclusion and contemplation; or spiritually - the edifying of souls recently converted to the hermitage is a major distraction; or both. The human answer is that Romuald should abandon what he has already built for himself and allow it to be destroyed. Thus "**semetipsum ... conservaret**". Romuald knows that this is no salvation. The very clamour of those who stand outside the cell and advocate it is the antithesis of the rest of contemplation that betokens salvation, a rest for which the cell is site and symbol. As he must **requiescere** in the cell he cannot **acquiescere** in this clamour. There is in fact no human answer to the problem, and the holy man knows God well enough to

do what his vocation requires for both self and hermitage and leave it to God to look after him. Knowledge of this does not require to be kept from those who labour under him.

Damian's sources; literal historicity

Although studded with significant words and images, this narrative shows little sign of artificiality or distortion. It is not unlikely that, in a lifetime of supervising tree-felling, Romuald was involved in one or more perilous near-misses, immediately understood as miraculous by the eye-witnesses in just the way Damian describes. As the spiritual significance of such a miracle may also have been understood in monastic circles before the story reached Damian, it appears more likely than most to be approximately what he heard and roughly true to the event.

As Tabacco notes[6], an interpolation in the hagiographical codices - followed by the PL text - places this miracle at primitive Camaldoli. Although the next chapter returns to Monte Pietralata, because it relates a similar event, the first sentence of chapter 49 implies that the present story in fact belongs, with the previous chapter, at Aquabella. Damian, however, is not explicit on the point and may have placed it here for thematic reasons without a clear idea of its setting.

NOTES

1. Edificium.
1. Impetum minabatur; connotations of looming over ready to attack.
3. Acquiescens.
4. Virtus; connotations of miracle.
5. Cf. cc. 45 & 61. The cells of Fonte Avellana in Damian's own time were wooden. Cf., e.g. Cantin, op.cit., p.19.
6. VR p.89 n.1.

CHAPTER 48 A PEASANT IS MIRACULOUSLY SAVED FROM DEATH BENEATH ANOTHER TREE

A single story appears to underlie this chapter also, but with explicit editorial passages at beginning and end. It may therefore be divided into three: (i) the first two sentences (to p.90 1.5), in which Damian establishes in advance that the miracle is representative of many; (ii) the remainder of the chapter except for the last sentence (to p.90 1.15), relating the miracle; (iii) the last sentence, in which Damian comments briefly on its significance.

Damian's argument

The opening sentences are self-explanatory:

(i) Many are divinely protected by association with Romuald.

> But what are we to say about the divine guard around the venerable man when we know so well that others too were often rescued from great dangers by his presence? Of these it will in fact suffice here to recall just one, as the judicious reader will realise that there were more.

(ii) The falling tree does not harm the peasant.

> For one day, [when] he [was] himself staying with the workmen, he had an oak of very great size cut down on Monte Pietralata. This tree in fact hung on a steep slope of the mountain, leaning towards the depths. Now a certain peasant was standing a little below. So when the tree was cut, [it] fell heavily and rolled down the slope to a precipice, spinning the peasant, thereupon discovered, towards the nether regions[1], [its] onslaught unexpected. Everyone at once cried out [in] grief, and already assumed not only that the man was dead but also that his whole body had been torn to pieces. But [how] marvellous [is] divine power![2] At once he was discovered, safe and sound, just as if it had been not the tree but a leaf of the tree that had fallen on him.

As in the previous chapter, the narrative here is coherent but

puzzling. For if the tree leans out into empty space in the way described, it should be obvious that it will roll as it does. Why then is it cut down while the peasant is standing beneath it and how can its onset be described as "**repentinus**"? If the explanation is that the workmen and the peasant were unaware of each other's presence, which Damian does not say and which seems unlikely if the peasant was only "**paulo inferius**", then how did the axemen become aware of what had happened? No shouts or any other reactions on the peasant's part are described. Once again the explanation is probably that Damian is not primarily interested in the narrative and includes only sufficient detail to make a point symbolically.

The depths into which the fallen tree threatens to hurl the peasant almost certainly represent hell; he almost goes over the precipice into the abyss. The cause of the danger is not a fault within himself but the actions of Romuald's workmen, under his own saintly command, higher up the spiritual mountain.[3] What they are doing there is clearly dangerous, but there is no real cause to fear. For just as God protects, from the perils of hermitage-building, what Romuald has edified for himself so He will protect anyone else who may be threatened. Romualdine eremitism will harm no one.

Damian completes the chapter with a comment on why this should be so:

(iii) The tree's weight is counteracted by the saint's weight.

> How much weight the sainted man's merit had with God is rightly assessed from this, [that] in His sight the very heavy mass of the tree was unable to have [any] weight.

Damian thus returns to the image of weight that has figured so prominently in early chapters of the **Life**[4], twice using the word

pondus in this one Latin sentence. As in those previous chapters, a weight may be bad or good, tending downwards to hell or upwards to God. Because Romuald's merit is so great, the crushing, evil weight of the tree is rendered no more real in effect than the "**phantasticum pondus**" with which the devil as incubus has tried to weigh down Romuald himself in chapter 7.

Damian's sources

Considering the location of Monte Pietralata[5], this story is most likely to have come to Damian at San Vincenzo.

Literal historicity

The miracle recorded here appears to be of similar status to that of the preceding chapter. Although incomplete, the story shows little sign of distortion or artificiality. It seems probable that it was originally remembered that the tree miraculously missed the man, such that he was struck by only its leaves - as the beech has missed Romuald's cell - rather than that he was struck by a tree that turned out to be so lightweight that it was **as if** he had been struck by only a leaf; but beyond this, the story could well be roughly true to life.

NOTES

1. Ad inferiora; connotations of the underworld, as in **Psalm** 62 (63):10.
2. Virtus; connotations of miracle.
3. "Domine ... quis requiescet in monte sancto tuo?", asks the psalmist; **Ps.** 14(15):1. (He answers himself with a list of righteous deeds.)
4. Cf. cc. 6, 7, 8 & 11.
5. Cf. Tabacco, VR, p.85 n.1 and **Romualdo** p.80.

CHAPTER 49 ROMUALD IS ACCUSED OF BEING A DIRTY OLD MAN

This longer chapter may be divided historiographically into seven: (i) the first sentence (to p.91 l.5), briefly noting Romuald's ascent of Sitria; (ii) the remainder of the first paragraph (to p.91 l.5), explaining his frequent moves; (iii) the first two sentences of the second paragraph (to p.91 l.9), introducing an example of what he suffered at Sitria; (iv) the third to fifth sentences of this paragraph (to p.91 l.19), describing an accusation of homosexual activity; (v) the sixth and seventh sentences (to p.92 l.1), commenting on the silliness of this but its value to Romuald; (vi) the eighth sentence (to p.92 l.3), recording Romuald's own claim of foreknowledge of it; (vii) the closing sentence, outlining the accuser's fate.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald goes to Sitria.

> Now when Romuald later left Appeninno, he went up Monte Sitria to dwell [there].

His reason for doing so, and for the frequency of the moves that had already been detailed, is at once explained to prevent any misunderstanding. This is the first time a general explanation has been offered:

(ii) He must move frequently because of his popularity.

> Great care is to be taken, however, lest anyone, when he hears that the sainted man had moved around so many places, ascribe the burden[1] of pious work to the vice of levity. For [there is] no doubt [that] his moves were caused by the fact that an almost numberless throng of people would converge on the venerable man wherever he dwelt. Reason therefore demanded that when he saw

> the area of one place full with inhabitants, [and] a prior [had been] appointed there, he should then hurry on to fill up another one.

Romuald is no gyrovague. It is the **pondus** of his vocation that causes his moves, and Damian has just devoted two chapters to demonstrating that, although apparently crushingly perilous, this will cause no harm to either saint or "innocent bystander". This is the first suggestion that Romuald's peregrinations were deliberated on any consistent basis on his own part, the first clear indication that Romuald's eremitism did not result in religious communities on a merely **ad hoc** basis. Romuald is solitary because he lives on a higher plane than other men, but it is an integral part of his vocation to lead them in groups up towards that plane.

By dealing with the matter in the way he does here, Damian avoids any implication of a challenge to the primacy of the virtue of stability enshrined by the Benedictine **Rule** and tradition. For this **pondus** really is dangerous and has been rendered harmless only by the miraculous divine intervention that safeguards the extremely meritorious holy man in his work, and those around him affected by it. In this sense, it might be said that he was exempted from the perilous status of the gyrovagues by a special divine dispensation; which would not apply to any spiritual lightweight who might choose to move similarly often without the same good reason. It may once again be noted, however, that no authority on earth approves Romuald's moves.

(iii) He suffers at Sitria too much to record.

> Now to set out how many outrages[2], how much strife he suffered from his disciples in Sitria would exceed our ability. We here put down just one of them [and] pass over the rest in the interests of brevity.

(iv) He is accused of homosexual activity.

> For he had a certain disciple, named Romanus, who had been noble indeed by **engenderment**, but [was] in behaviour altogether **degenerate.** And so, as the sainted man not only condemned him verbally for the impurity of his flesh but also frequently punished him with very heavy floggings, this diabolical man was audacious [enough] to retort [with] a claim of the same sin against [Romuald] and to bay shamelessly against that temple of the Holy Spirit, sacrilege in [his] mouth. He said, in fact, that the sainted man had sinned together with him out of the same disease. And so the disciples were then all angry against him, all [of them] hostile. Some shouted that the impious old man ought to be hanged in a noose, others judged it appropriate to burn him up, with his little cell itself, in fire.

(v) Suffering this foolish accusation is a blessing to him.

> What was particularly marvellous was that spiritual men, especially, could believe such an abominable slander[3] of a decrepit old man even more than a hundred years old. Even if the will had been there, nature and the coldness of the blood and the dried-up condition of the worn-out body would nonetheless have prevented this entirely. But it is to be believed without any doubt that this so very severe scourging by antagonism befell the sainted man to increase his merit.

In this comment, one of the constant themes of the **Life** is given its most explicit treatment: Romuald's holy passion is at the hands of the religious whom he would save; his Christlike merit lies in his acceptance of the transferral to himself of the suffering and humiliation rightly due to sinners in his care, his participation in the work of the "suffering servant". Christ Himself, in the Beatitudes, extolled such suffering:

> **Beati estis cum maledixerint vobis, et persecuti vos fuerint, et dixerint omne malum adversum vos mentientes, propter me: gaudete, et exultate, quoniam merces vestra copiosa est in caelis: sic enim persecuti sunt prophetas, qui fuerunt ante vos.**[4]

When Damian describes the appallingly misplaced credulity of the brethren as "**mirabile**", therefore, it may well be that he is quite serious, thinking of this as a virtually miraculous sign of heavenly

favour just as St. John, for example, presents Christ's own efficacious suffering and humiliation in His scourging and Crucifixion by men as in fact the Father's preordained glorification of His Son.[5] At any rate, Romuald is not harmed by the trouble he dutifully brings upon himself in his edification work at Sitria. To this extent the significance of the present marvel may be seen as parallel to that of the averted falling tree of the chapter before last.

(vi) He claims foreknowledge of this.

> For even he himself used to declare that he had in truth realised this in the hermitage that he had just left, and that he had come eagerly to submit to this unfitting upbraiding and disgrace.[6]

As Bruno has courted actual martyrdom in chapter 27, so Romuald rushes to his martyrdom **in voto.** His eager suffering at Sitria will be followed up at greater length in the next chapter. For now, Damian turns his attention to the wicked accuser:

(vii) His accuser becomes a simoniacal bishop and perishes.

> That reprobate sarabaite, however, who had brought the charge against the sainted man, afterwards acquired the bishopric of Nocera by the heresy of simony.[7] He occupied it for two years, in the first of which he saw the church burnt with books and bells and the rest of the sacred accoutrements, in repayment of his merits, and in the second he lost his office with his life, sentenced divinely to be struck dead.

The thoroughly deserved fate that Romanus thus suffers in death and the fiery destruction of his dwelling is equivalent to that chosen for Romuald, although not in fact inflicted, by the disciples. The identification of Romanus as a sarabaite seems to fit neither St. Benedict's nor John Cassian's definition of these unacceptable monks very well.[8] Perhaps Damian is adapting Benedict's emphasis on the

sarabaite's **desideriorum voluptas** to apply the term to a man whom he intends to set in polar opposition to Romuald. For the saintly hermit might well be charged with sarabaitism himself by the rest of Benedict's definition. Damian thus proves in the one chapter that Romuald belongs to neither of Benedict's categories of false monks, the sarabaites and the gyrovagues.

Damian's sources

The seven sections are quite disparate.

The first two, comprising the first paragraph, are scarcely related to the rest of the chapter. The opening sentence, simply mentioning the move to Sitria without describing the place at all, is an unadorned historical detail prefixed to the chapter because it is necessary. More will be said about Sitria in later chapters.[9] The second, the generalising summary adducing the pressing crowds as the reason for the frequency of Romuald's moves, is a virtual footnote to this, which could be either based in received information or represent Damian's own informed interpretation.[10] The only apparent reason why it should be placed in this chapter rather than one of the many others recording the saint's moves is that the **pondus** image could be carried over directly from the preceding chapters to help make the point.

Of the five sections comprising the main part of the chapter (the second paragraph), two are clearly editorial: the opening sentence (third section of the chapter), introducing the outrage suffered at Sitria as only one among many, and the sentences pointing out how the silly and wicked accusation added to Romuald's merits (fifth section). The former of these may arise from a genuine knowledge of other

problems at Sitria or, as Damian believed and has established as early as chapter 17 that the devil worked assiduously among Romuald's disciples, by assumption. The latter adds the (questionable) detail that Romuald was already over a hundred years old, but its main point is clearly a piece of theological interpretation. This again may be based in received opinion or be simply Damian's own.

Three sections remain to carry the narrative: the fourth, telling of the accusation and disciple's response; the sixth, noting Romuald's foresight; and the seventh, relating the bishop's fate. Of these, the single last sentence about the foresight is virtually a footnote to the fourth section and the appended comment that constitutes the fifth. It is only the fourth and seventh, therefore, that really tell the story of the chapter.

As in so many other chapters, there is a hiccup in the narrative between these two, and once again symbolism is probably the cause. For the former ends dramatically with the brethren all turned enraged against Romuald, clamouring for his death by hanging or by fire, about which nothing further is subsequently said. When the matter of Romuald's punishment is taken up again in the next chapter, he is simply excluded from the altar. The story has probably been distorted, therefore, to include these death threats which symbolically parallel and foreshadow the spiritual fate in fact due to, and in time suffered by, the accuser. This is necessary to bring Romuald centrally into the story, in which he would otherwise appear little more than incidentally, and to dissociate Romanus from the Romualdine asceticism practised at Sitria. For what remains in this narrative if the unjust anger directed against Romuald is set aside, is a record of a simoniacal bishop known to have emanated from that

hermitage, and possibly from among Romuald's personal disciples. He may also have been known or presumed to have been a nicolaitist; simony and nicolaitism have been paired where they have appeared earlier in the **Life.**[11] How could there be such a pupil of such a master? For those who venerated Romuald as a specially endowed agent of God and believed his hermitages institutionalised the same **virtus**, the simple explanation that he failed with this one could not have been adequate. The positive theological explanation of the fifth section is the answer - Romanus's wickedness is the climax of the Christlike passion Romuald suffers throughout at the hands of the monks he has been sent to save - and the narrative assumes a form that reflects this. As a similar explanation may well predate Damian, it is possible that these fourth and seventh sections record approximately what he heard, with his own editorial statement inserted between them to ensure that the main point is not missed.

As Sitria was close to Fonte Avellana, it is probable that he heard this story, and the others about Sitria in the next chapter, at his "home" hermitage or on a visit to Sitria itself.[12]

Literal historicity

That Romuald suffered the problem of numerous converts distracting him from his own eremitical devotion is likely to be true. Such holy men are known to have been major attractions in this and other periods of history and the same problem has been evident at other places in the **Life.** It is confirmed for Romuald by Bruno, as Tabacco notes.[13] Of all the points raised by the chapter, this one, with Romuald's chosen solution, is perhaps the most important piece of evidence for the history of eleventh-century eremitism.

That he ever reached anything approaching the age of a hundred is denied by modern scholarship. Damian believed, for Biblically based reasons, that Romuald died at the age of a hundred and twenty and has probably worked out his age at this stage on the simple principle that it was less than twenty years before his death. This will be considered further in relation to chapter 69.

That Romuald used to claim afterwards that he had known in advance - presumably by prophetic power - that he would suffer the described disgrace at Sitria and that he had hurried eagerly to it seems most unlikely. Damian, in his own eagerness to show the saint's willingness to undergo Christlike suffering, seems unaware that such a claim, when made retrospectively by Romuald himself, would amount to spiritual boasting so serious as to cast him into the abyss of spiritual pride. This is presumably a piece of admiring embroidery received uncritically by Damian with the main story.[14]

NOTES

1. Pondus.
2. Contumeliae; cf. c.22 n.9 and c.33 n.1.
3. Or "wickedness"; scelus.
4. **Matthew** 5:11-12.
5. Cf. J. Marsh, **The Pelican New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel of St. John** (Harmondsowrth, 1968), pp. 147 & 481 ff.
6. Dehonestatis improperium; on the sin of improperium, cf. J. Hennessy, "Insult", in **The New Catholic Encyclopaedia**, and c.22 n.9. above.
7. Cf. c.35 n.25.
8. Cf. c.4 n.11 and c.34 section (iii).
9. Cc. 52, 64 and 68.
10. Cf. Cassian, **Conference** 24 c.19, where the number of adherents increases in proportion to the holiness of the master, no matter how much remote his situation.
11. Cf. cc. 35 & 41.
12. Cf. Tabacco, VR, p.90 n.2 and **Romualdo**, p.80.
13. VR p.90 n.3.
14. Tabacco, VR p.92 n.1, compares this piece of foresight to that concerning the abbacy of Sant 'Apollinare in c.22. Damian may or may not have thought it similar himself, but it is in fact different in that abbacy is a pastoral responsibility for which special preparation may be desirable (cf. c.22) whereas a

Christian ought to be prepared to suffer false accusations for Christ's sake at any time.

CHAPTER 50 ROMUALD IS TAKEN IN RAPTURE AT MASS AND ORDERED TO EXPOUND THE PSALMS

Two historiographical divisions may be made here: (i) the first three sentences (to p.92 l.18), in which Romuald abstains from celebrating mass in "penitence" for the sin he has not committed in the previous chapter, until he is divinely ordered to return to the altar; (ii) the remainder of the chapter, where the rapture is described.

Damian's argument

The hagiographer is quite straightforward in the opening section:

(i) Romuald is forbidden by the brethren but divinely commanded to celebrate mass.

> And so the disciples imposed penance on the sainted man, as though the crime [had been] committed, even totally withdrawing his licence to celebrate the sacred mysteries. [Romuald] accepted this wrongful act gladly, and both observed the penance as if he were really guilty of the charge and for about six months did not presume to approach the sacred altar. Eventually, however, as he himself afterwards told those same disciples of his, it was divinely commanded him that if losing divine grace was something he dreaded, he should now set this indiscreet simplicity aside completely and confidently celebrate the sacred rites of the mass.

(ii) He is taken in rapture and ordered to expound the Psalms.

> He therefore began to sacrifice on the next day, [and] when it came to the second secret[1] prayers of the mass, he fell silent, rapt in ecstasy for so long a period of time that everyone who was present marvelled. And when he was afterwards asked why, in offering the sacrifice, he had such long pauses, beyond the usual, he replied, "I was rapt into Heaven [and] brought[2] before God, and I was immediately ordered by the divine voice to expound the psalms, in accordance with this understanding God has instilled in me, and to the best of my ability to commit my perceptions, in series, to written records. I was held fast by a great and unwavering dread [and] was able to reply nothing but, "So be it, so be it."" And so the sainted man afterwards brilliantly expounded the entire psalter and no small number of

> the canticles of the prophets, and although the rules of grammar were broken, he nonetheless correctly observed the sound meaning throughout.

What Damian has to say here is strongly reminiscent of chapter 31, where Romuald, while saying mass, was granted perfection, floods of tears and the gift of penetrating the mysteries of Scripture. The present sentences arise from the same conceptions about the mass and add only a little to the earlier argument. They do, however, advance it further in that, whereas Romuald's **tears** were previously sacrificed alongside the sacrifice of the mass, his rapture now into the very presence of God suggests that he himself has come to be accepted as a sacrifice received into Heaven with that of the mass.[3] His completely humble passion at the hands of the monks in the previous chapter is thus rewarded with the very fullness of contemplation.[4]

This is very greatly to the disciples' advantage. For alongside the grace of the Spirit that is returned to those sacrificing the mass, now comes the special grace that Romuald can penetrate the enigmas of the psalms - of all Biblical literature the most prayerfully contemplative, the most frequently repeated throughout the monastic world, and perhaps the most difficult in language - together with the enigmas of the prophets, recording his perceptions to be read by (or to) others. Thus Romuald dies with Christ for his disciples and returns with the Holy Spirit to counsel them. There can be no fuller or more salutary participation in God's central act of history.

Damian's sources

The two sections show no necessary narrative connection. The former, relating the exclusion from and readmission to the altar, is clearly used as a link passage between the false accusation of the previous

chapter and the coming rapture, but this latter is in fact of a kind for which chapter 31 has already prepared and it could stand independent of the chapter-and-a-half that leads up to it. The real binding force, as suggested above, is a theological interpretation of the significance of Romuald and his present rapture. The two sections may therefore be studied semi-separately.

Although Damian's argument in the first of them is apparently quite straightforward, the narrative appears to have required a certain degree of distortion to carry it. For Romuald's status both within the community and before God in these few lines is unclear. At the beginning he humbly accepts the sentence imposed on him by his disciples as though they have authority to do this, but when he is divinely ordered to ignore their injunction (without being given any corroborative sign as evidence for them) and announces this fact to them it becomes clear, as the reader may in any case have guessed, that they have no such authority over him after all.[5] Damian evidently intends it to be understood as an act of self-humiliation on Romuald's part that he submits to his disciples and calls it by the name of that great virtue, **simplicitas.** No explanation, however, is offered for the brethren's belief that they have such a right, nor does the saint's response square well with the prophetic power he has displayed in the previous chapter's prediction and is about to display again in Scriptural interpretation, because he must in the end admit that it is not really God's will. By using the phrase "**indiscreta simplicitas**" Damian is trying to have it both ways - Romuald's mistake is to be so very saintly as indeed to overdo it - but in fact there can be no real sanctity about any act that is **indiscreta.** Although he is not guilty of the crime of which he is accused, he therefore slips nonetheless, however temporarily, away from God and

needs to be divinely threatened with God's own excommunication before he returns to the fullness of sanctity.

The reason why Damian has tangled himself up in this way is probably that the information on which he is drawing originally had nothing to do with the context in which he has put it. As suggested in relation to the previous chapter, it is unlikely that the brethren of Sitria turned collectively against Romuald in the way described. On the other hand it is plain from chapter 52 that Romuald voluntarily isolated himself for a very long period at Sitria, and his self-isolation in celebrating mass at Parenzo, where he in any case lived away from the monastery, has already been mentioned in chapter 31, his floods of tears being adduced there to explain it. If the introductory sentence-and-a-half of the present chapter, stating that Romuald's withdrawal from the altar was the disciples' decision, is set aside, what remains is a brief record of a divine command to Romuald to return to the altar after he has voluntarily removed himself from it as an act of penitence. Now the whole monastic life could be regarded as an act of penitence for past sin[6], and such religious in any case remained conscious of their continuing sinfulness throughout their lives. The **Rule** of St. Benedict, moreover, prescribed excommunication, within the monastic complex, for brethren guilty of more serious faults, and this could include isolation from all the other brethren, flogging and suspension from the oratory.[7] The silence, reclusion and self-flagellation in which Romuald spends so much of his life are partly to be understood as penitential within the same broad tradition. An indiscreet excess to which a zealous hermit, conscious of his unworthiness, might therefore be tempted would be lengthy or even permanent self-excommunication from the altar itself. What comes through in the present chapter,

even as Damian tells it, is a statement by the model hermit to his disciples at Sitria that this is not the will of God for him. Damian or his informant perhaps had difficulty believing that Romuald could ever have slipped into such an error of his own accord and in any case believed that that perfected holy man no longer had any new sins for which to make amends; and so the excommunication becomes part of his passion at the hands of the disciples.

Because of this passion aspect, it pairs very well with the Sitria rapture into Heaven. This story, by contrast, seems to have no narrative difficulty about it. Indeed, as it explains the divine commission behind the Psalter commentary attributed to Romuald, it could very well have circulated quite independently of the rest of the Sitria information and there is no apparent reason to believe that Damian has significantly distorted what he heard about it.

Literal historicity

As suggested in relation to the previous chapter, it seems improbable that the brethren of Sitria really turned **en masse** against Romuald in the way described. That he counselled against self-exclusion or lengthy exclusion from the mass as a form of penance and that he was perceived to be taken in rapture at the altar are not unlikely. That he expounded the psalms is not unlikely either, but modern studies of the written exposition attributed to him have shown it to be spurious[8], despite the early date of the attribution.

NOTES

1. I.e. silent, or softly spoken; cf. VR p.93 n.1.
2. Oblatus.
3. Romuald says, "in celum oblatus sum"; oblatus being the past participle of offero.

4. Cantin, op.cit., pp. 20-21, observes that Damian from time to time explicitly identified ecstasy and union to God with contemplation; e.g., "Sed inde profecti veniunt in Thare, quod graece quidem ecstasis interpretatur, in nostra vero lingua dicitur contemplatio" (Op.32, **De quadragesima**, PL145, 555A). "L'essentiel", explains Cantin, "est pour lui la présence, astare, devant son Créateur, n'étant rien, recevant tout de lui. Solis divinae maiestatis obtutibus trementes astamus" (Ep.1, 15, PL144, 227B).
5. On the question of what, if any juridical status Romuald had in such communities, cf. c.18 n.18.
6. Cf., e.g., Op.11, **Liber qui dicitur Dominus vobiscum**, PL145, 248B.
7. **Ben. Reg.** cc. 23-28.
8. Cf. Tabacco, VR p.93 n.3

CHAPTER 51 ROMUALD'S SOUL IS BORNE BEFORE GOD, AS WHITE AS SNOW

This short chapter is most conveniently taken as a whole:

> One day the disciples asked him, "Master, whose soul is deemed to be of age, and in what form is it presented for judgment?" He replied, "I know a man in Christ, whose soul has been carried before God shining like snow[1], in human likeness in fact, with the stature of [someone] fully grown." [When he was] questioned again, [as to] who this might be, he was annoyed and would not say, [which] perplexed them. The disciples thereupon [discussed the matter] among themselves [and] ascribed the event to him, as truly was the case, and realised, by indubitable revelation, that he himself had been the man.

Damian's argument

Damian shows no interest in following up the considerable theological and philosophical ramifications of this chapter, despite the fact that the disciples in the story have themselves been motivated by such considerations. He appears to be satisfied to record that rapture has revealed the perfect condition of Romuald's soul, virtually as a footnote to the previous chapter. The chapter, however, may be more important in Damian's presentation of Romuald's peculiar sanctity than its brevity would suggest, making its point through a typology left to the reader to understand.

For St. Augustine had used the same quotation from St. Paul - "**Scio hominem in Christo ...**" - in relation to St. John's identification of Christ as antitype of Jacob's ladder, and although Damian does not mention this famous ladder, it can be seen from what Augustine had to say that there may well be an implicit reference to it here, Augustine's concluding sentence suggesting that Damian could have seen this chapter not as just an appendage to its predecessor but as a link to the apparently unrelated **conversatio** record of its successor:

> **Quid autem vidit tunc in scalis?** asked Augustine. **Adscendentes et descendentes angelos.**[2] **Sic est et ecclesia, fratres; angeli Dei, boni praedicatores, praedicantes Christum ... Vide Paulum adscendentem** [Paul was also understood to have been referring to himself]: **"Scio hominem in Christo ... raptum fuisse usque in tertium caelum ... et audisse ineffabilia verba quae non licet homini loqui."**[3] **Adscendentem audistis, descendentem audite. "Non potui loqui vobis quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus, quasi parvulis in Christo lac vobis potum dedi, non escam ..."**[4] **Videmus enim et nutrices et matres descendere ad parvulos ... Si ipse Dominus adscendit et descendit, manifestum est quia et praedicatores ipsius adscendunt imitatione, descendunt praedicatione.**[5]

Romuald has just been seen ascending on the ladder of Christ, in imitation of Him, in his rapture at mass. The resulting preaching has begun in the written, divinely inspired exposition of the psalms. The inspired preaching of his **conversatio** will be the theme of the next chapter.[6]

Damian's sources

Although he does not credit the **apostolus** with the words quoted from him, it is not likely that Damian had forgotten the well-known Pauline model. Tabacco notes a passage from Tertullian, **De anima**,[7] in which a similar rapture of a similarly described soul is related, without saying plainly whether he intends the reader to understand that Damian had this also in mind at the time he wrote[8], perhaps because it cannot be demonstrated either way. This last point may be made also of the passage from Augustine quoted above, but in either case it is clear that patristic written exemplars of this kind have directly or indirectly informed and shaped the chapter.

In view of Damian's prologue claim that he will tell only the truth, however, there must also be an oral reminiscence of Romuald behind this chapter because the story is not purely allegory and it is not one that could have been deduced. As it stands, it begins as a record

of a teaching session, disciples questioning their master on a particular theological matter and being answered by reference to a Scriptural text interpreted in patristic terms. Although Paul had written that text in self-reference, Romuald's allusion to it would not require to be self-referential on his part too and the interpretation of it in that way that is attributed to the brethren in fact deflects attention from the matter in question to purely hagiographical ends. It would seem, therefore, that the story originated as a reminiscence of a point of Romuald's teaching, reinterpreted hagiographically as a self-reference because of the nature of the quotation from St. Paul. Damian's statement that the disciples soon realised for themselves what Romuald meant suggests that the story already had approximately its present form when he heard it. As it is given no date and shows no necessary connection with Sitria, however, its position just here in the **Life** may be at Damian's own initiative.

Literal historicity

Whereas Paul reads as though he is indeed referring to himself, almost openly, it is plain in this chapter that Romuald did **not** claim to have had such a vision of his own soul in rapture.

Although Romuald has twice been presented in the **Life** as an inspired exponent of Scripture[9], Damian has paid little attention to the **content** of any teaching or preaching except where it directly concerns the conduct of the ascetic **conversatio.** More **general** religious teaching, thoroughly orthodox and soundly unoriginal, taken directly from the Bible and the Fathers, may in fact have been an important part of the saint's work among the uninformed converts he gathered

directly from the world into various of the communities he "founded".

NOTES

1. On how one comes to be as white as snow through contemplation, cf. Op.13, **De perfectione monachorum**, PL145, 303CD.
2. **John** 1:51.
3. 2nd **Corinthians** 12:2-4.
4. 1st **Corinthians** 3:1-2.
5. **Tract. in Ioh. VII**, 23, ll. 14-48, CCSL, 36, pp. 80-81.
6. Jacob's ladder, which Damian does not mention explicitly anywhere in the **Life**, became Romuald's saintly emblem. In his **Rule**, c.7, St. Benedict gave a quite different explanation of its meaning, in terms of the degrees of humility by which the monk ascends to Heaven (or alternatively, descends by self-exaltation). Although the two interpretations are obviously unrelated, they are not incompatible in that Augustine's is allegorical whereas Benedict's is tropological. In Op.11, **Liber qui dicitur Dominus vobiscum**, PL145, 248B, Damian addresses the eremus as "Tu scala illa Iacob, quae homines vehis ad coelum, et angelos ad humanum deponis auxilium". Romuald is at any rate going up.
7. VR p.94 n.1: **De anima**, IX, 4, CCSL, **Tertulliani opera**, II, p.792.
8. Tertullian's explanation is not only much fuller (Tabacco does not cite it all) but uses a slightly different terminology; there are no phrases in common. It is also questionable whether the two authors' intentions are quite the same.
9. Cc. 31 & 50.

CHAPTER 52 HE PREACHES BY HIS CONVERSATIO AT SITRIA

Four historiographical divisions may be made here: (i) the first sentence, stating that Romuald was long enclosed and silent at Sitria; (ii) the second sentence (to p.94 1.10), commenting on how he preached and converted nonetheless; (iii) the third to ninth sentences (to p.95 1.13), in which a **conversatio** modelled on St. Hilarion's is described; (iv) the concluding lines, in which Romuald challenges gluttony after the model of the **Vitae patrum.**

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald is enclosed and silent.

> The venerable man, furthermore, stayed enclosed in Sitria for about seven years, and inviolably maintained continuous silence.

Although Damian does not himself draw out the parallel, it may be noted that Romuald has been silent for a marvellous duration as he has been rapt into Heaven at mass in chapter 50. The present silence may be taken as the extension of that supreme contemplative moment through his whole subsequent **conversatio** at Sitria. His whole life is now charged with the **virtus** that has effected the rapture. This makes of him a living message:

(ii) He preaches by his life.

> And yet, although his tongue was silent, he preached by his life[1] and was scarcely able to work anywhere so greatly at any time either in converting men or flocking them to repentance.

Thus the argument of the previous chapter is completed: ascending to God in rapture, he also descends to men in preaching.

(ii) This life is described.

> For he lived, [when he was] already verging on old age, very strictly indeed, as can be seen from the fact that now even perfect men commonly live more loosely and relax for themselves something of the rigour he practised. For through the whole period of one Lent he had nothing at all either for food or for drink other than a broth he made from a modicum of flour and a few herbs, on which he lived in imitation of Hilarion. In fact for five weeks he ate nothing else and restricted himself to a modicum of soaked chickpeas. And thus Romuald tested, by many different manners of living, what he was spiritually powerful enough to do[2], exercising himself continually by one means and another. Indeed the discreet soldier of Christ applied himself constantly to equipping himself for new combat and, at the very moment he was driven to [the point of] falling, then [to] call mercy in [and] relieve his staggering little body, and although he had two or even three hairshirts because of the growing oppressiveness of [his] body, he did not permit them to be washed at all but rather threw them to the rain [and] used to change them [only] after thirty days. Nor did he ever suffer a razor to go up to his head, but used himself to cut the excess [growth] of hair and beard with clippers.

Although Damian here leaves it to the reader to understand, he explained such extreme poverty and bodily unconcern later, in his **De contemptu saeculi**, in direct relation to the perfect withdrawal of which the unbroken silence is also a characteristic:

> **Paupertas monachi securitas est mentis, securitas mater est puritatis. Econtra rerum abundantia aculeos parit sollicitudinis, sollicitudo radix est anxietatis. Pedes illoti, manus neglectae, inculta caesaries, quasi quaedam anchora est monachi in cella iugiter permanendi: e diverso accurata delicati corporis compositio fomes est, et occasio in publicum prodeundi.**[3]

Damian's exposition of Barzillai the Gileadite[4] is also instructive:

> **Berzellai Galaadites senex valde ... transduxit regem David Iordanem; cui rex: Veni, inquit, ut requiescas mecum in Hierusalem. Ille autem renuens, excusationem senectutis obtendit, et, relicto rege, mox ad propria repedavit. Sunt namque nonnulli qui regem David, hoc est Salvatorem nostrum sequentes, Iordanis fluenta transmittunt; hoc est, vel baptismi suscipiunt sacramentum, vel, quod secundum est lavacrum, arripiunt spirituale propositum ... Sed hi veste variata, non mente, habitum mutando, non animum, ad pristinos redeunt mores et saeculares repetunt actiones ... Senes enim sunt, et inveterati, atque ideo nequeunt in novam de vetusta conversatione mutari ...**

Barzillai is offered the delights of Jerusalem - "**hoc est in visione pacis habitare cum rege**" - but refuses them:

> "**Nunquid vigent sensus mei ad discernendum suave et amarum? Aut delectare potest servum tuum cibus, et potus? ...**" Veraciter enim talium hominum sensus intrinsecus obtusi sunt, quia spiritualia mentis edulia ... non discernunt; non enim eis sapit cibus ille coelestis, ad quem Propheta spirituales convivias invitat: "Gustate", inquit, "et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus".[5] Nec illa fauces eorum mella discernunt, de quibus aiebat: "Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua, Domine, super mel et favum ori meo!"[6]

The typical man of unwashed garment and untrimmed beard, on the other hand, is Miphiboseth, immediately preceding Barzillai in the Bible text.[7]

> **Miphiboseth quoque filius Saul ... illotis pedibus, et intonsa barba: vestesque suos non laverat a die qua egressus fuerat rex, usque ad diem reversionis eius in pace.**

It is he who is able to say, "**tu ... posuisti me servum tuum inter convivias mensae tuae.**"

Thus Romuald preaches by his life. What he preaches now is no more nor less than the **conversatio** appropriate to an **anima delata ... ante Deum splendida velut nix.** This is the closest to permanent rapture that a religious still in the earthly body may approach. It is a summary of what the ascetic hermit may achieve; a life of **virtus** so great that he is now in perfect control. No longer is he tempted to fall away into vice through his body; now he virtuously tempts his body to fall away, and yields to his corporeal condition only to the minimal degree that discretion requires. Damian completes the chapter by developing further the argument about food and demonstrating how even through this, the body's most fundamental necessity, no real temptation can any longer be raised against him:

(iv) He taunts gluttony.

> And if, indeed, the vice of gluttony[8] should tickle [his fancy] with some food that was nice to eat, he would at once order this to be carefully prepared, place it before his mouth and nostrils, take in only the smell, and say, "O [my] gullet, [my] gullet, how sweet, how pleasant this food might taste to you just now. But alas for you! You will never eat of this." And so he would send it back untouched to the cellarer.

Gula may mean both "throat" and "gluttony". Romuald apparently uses it in both senses at once, although it cannot be translated thus into English. When he addresses his throat, therefore, he is probably to be understood as also addressing what Cassian, for example, had called "the spirit of gluttony",[9] the evil principle or demon of that deadly sin. In this case, Damian's intention is probably not so much to present Romuald as gratuitously tempting himself as mocking the devil. Romuald has already mocked him to some degree in chapter 17, but whereas he did so there defensively, as a strategic response to a frighteningly powerful attack, he is now on the offensive. Romuald can now tempt demons. The benefits of this for his disciples will become apparent in the next two chapters.

Damian's sources

The basic historical point of this chapter is that of the first sentence, that Romuald has long and thoroughly withdrawn at Sitria, a point anticipated to some extent by chapter 50.

The second sentence, stating that Romuald preached by his life is clearly editorial.

The third and longest section, as Damian himself indicates and Tabacco repeatedly notes, owes a great deal to St. Jerome's Life of St.

Hilarion, with a couple of reminiscences of Romuald's fasting practices already described in chapters 6 and 9. For the refusal to trim beard or wash clothes, Tabacco also notes reminiscences of St. Athanasius's Antony and the **Vita Abrahae.** The collocation of these various allusions may be explained by their common reflection in the story of Mephiboseth.

That Romuald indeed modelled himself so particularly on Hilarion that the various ascetic practices described reached Damian also orally from a Sitria source seems unlikely on the internal evidence at two points. Firstly, Damian states that Romuald lived thus "**vergente iam senectute**", when he has already claimed in chapter 49 that the saint was over a hundred years old at Sitria and quite shrivelled with his years. As Jerome had recorded Hilarion's age as between sixty-four and eighty at the time of his equivalent ascetic rigour, it seems that Damian's mental picture was dominated directly by the ancient model at this point. Secondly, when he states that Romuald "**per multa alia vivendi genera, quid sua virtus posset ... temptabat**", he not only adds a point to his argument but also allows himself an escape route from any objection that Romuald was not in fact known to live for seven years at Sitria in exactly the way described. Damian has already recorded Romuald's exemplary ascetic practices much earlier in the **Life.** The main point of the present sentences is not to record more of them but to demonstrate the **quality** of the saint's **conversatio** after his rapture. For this to be honestly done, it is enough for the hagiographer to know that the saint was **equal** to Hilarion (and to Antony and Abraham), and perhaps that he specially venerated Hilarion and recommended him as a model.

The concluding section, recording the challenges to gluttony, is

modelled, as Tabacco notes, on the **Vitae patrum.**[10] It certainly cannot originate also in an oral record from Sitria unless Romuald, contrary to Damian's prologue claim and to Christ's own commandment about fasting in the "Sermon on the Mount",[11] boastfully allowed himself to be seen performing such feats of **virtus** or came to be believed to have done so. If there is an oral element in this story, it is more likely to be simply that of the last half-sentence, that Romuald frequently returned meals untouched to the kitchen. In the joint context of the spiritual and ascetic conditions he has just described and the ancient exemplar, Damian could have deduced the rest.

Literal historicity

There is no reason to doubt Damian's evidence that Romuald lived in strict seclusion for a long period at Sitria or that he took Hilarion's example to heart. It has already been seen that at least from his Cuxa days, from chapter 6 on, Romuald was deeply conscious of the example set by the marvellous ascetics of antiquity and motivated by it in his own life.

NOTES

1. Cf. c.27 n.13.
2. Quid sua virtus posset.
3. Op.12, **De contemptu saeculi**, PL145, 278BC.
4. 2nd **Kings** 19:31-37; **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**; PL145, 1107B-1108B.
5. **Psalm** 33(34):9.
6. **Psalm** 118(119):103. Verse 100 of this psalm begins, "super senes intellexi..."
7. 2nd **Kings** 19:24-30.
8. Gula.
9. Of which he treats in the **Institutes**, Book 5.
10. VR p.95 n.8.
11. **Matthew** 6:16. Cf. c.53 n.2.

CHAPTER 53 HE CURES A HEADACHE BY INSUFFLATION

This shorter chapter may be divided historiographically into three: (i) the first sentence (to p.96 l.3), in which Romuald is permanently cheerful of face; (ii) the second to fourth sentences (to p.96 l.12), describing the healing miracle; (iii) the last three sentences, in which Damian comments on it.

Damian's argument

(i) Romuald is always cheerful and serene.

> But although the sainted man observed such great austerity toward himself, he nonetheless always showed a cheerful countenance, always a serene face.

This is a standard sign of sanctity[1] which Damian might have introduced much earlier in the **Life**. It is particularly appropriate now, however, immediately following the climax of the record of the saint's lifelong victory over gluttony, because of Christ's commandment in the "Sermon on the Mount":

> **Cum autem ieiunatis, nolite fieri sicut hypocritae tristes. Exterminant enim facies suas, ut appareant hominibus ieiuantes. Amen dico vobis, quia receperunt mercedem suam.**[2]

Damian has just described a Romuald whose appearance as he fasts is otherwise quite sufficiently disfigured (although seen by few). He will now show that the saint was most certainly not **tristis** of face amid his mess and that he attempted to conceal his **virtus**:

(ii) He cures the headache.

> For a certain brother, named Gregory, once complained that he was suffering a severe headache. He came, moaning a great deal, to the blessed man's little cell, where there were then

> other brethren too. As soon as the venerable man saw him, he unhesitatingly ascribed this pain not to any imbalance of the humours but to the wiles of the ancient enemy; and he thereupon, as if ridiculing [the brother], as he [Romuald] was always blithe in expression, breathed on him, on the forehead, through the window of his little cell and signalled that all the others who were there should do the same. And this being done, he was so [thoroughly] healed that he felt no slightest trace of pain remaining in his head.

The victim of the headache is in a condition of pain and grief antithetical to that of the blithe beatitude enjoyed by Romuald. Once again the saint defeats the devil, who is responsible, by mocking him, having penetrated the condition of the sufferer with prophetic power. In the process, the joy of the indwelling Holy Spirit that shows so clearly on his face is transmitted to drive out the misery of evil.

Damian adds his own explicit comment on this:

(iii) He does so by imitating Christ.

> It is my judgment that the sainted man wished to do this for the reason that he believed that [that] most hostile foe the instigator of suffering was to be put to flight by the Holy Spirit, who presided in his breast. It was in fact for the sake of avoiding praise for himself that he both feigned [making] a game [of it] and sought associates [in it]. For even our Redeemer is read to have breathed, when He is recorded as giving the Holy Spirit to the apostles.

Damian's sources

In the last sentences Damian argues that Romuald's healing act was really much more serious than it looked; yet he has himself earlier presented it as quite foolish in appearance when, in view of the precedent, he might have shown it in a serious light from the start. Furthermore, he does not make his own view altogether clear, whether he shares Romuald's belief that the Holy Spirit needed to be transmitted in quite the way described. The words "arbitror...

quia... credidit" seem to distance the author from the actor. In the next chapter, however, Damian appears to accept without any hesitation that the Spirit was in fact repeatedly transmitted curingly in Romuald's breath.[3] The reason for this equivocation may be that Damian is once again trying to have it both ways. Having shown a Romuald who might be misunderstood as disfiguring himself in his fast, he needs to show the saint blithe of face. He may not have had a great deal of material with which to do so. The Romuald depicted in most of the stories of the **Life** is in a permanent state of penitence, austere, remote and even forbidding. The uncompromised ascetic who has refused to become a men-pleaser by making any allowances for the weaknesses of his monkish charges, who has dramatically cast down his rod of office at the feet of an emperor and foretold that monarch's doom, who has struck the fear of God into the hearts of trembling and speechless noblemen, who has flogged his own father into Heaven, who has wrestled with the devil through whole nights, and who has withdrawn from the altar lest he be seen to weep and has fled, quite broken down, from preaching because of the veritable floods of his tears,[4] cannot really have been remembered as having done all that he ever did with gaiety of countenance. Damian has perhaps therefore drawn out the comic aspect of the present story - derision of the devil can be more bitter than cheery, as in chapter 7 - and described a Romuald deliberately making a game of the healing so as to be able to depict him with a cheerful face. A more straightforward account might concentrate instead, as the next chapter does, on the miracle of healing by Christlike transmission of the Spirit, which cannot be presented as jocular if the blowing is unequivocably presented as essential to it.[5] It may certainly be suspected that the story, which shows no necessary connection with Sitria or any other place or time, circulated orally primarily as just such a healing tale, and has been

adapted by Damian to make his own points. As Tabacco notes,[6] Athanasius's Antony also showed a cheery face, and St. Martin too may be adduced.[7] As the brethren are associated in the healing, Damian is able to prove at the same time that although Romuald's amazing fasting had not been entirely concealed from them, he did in fact do his best to prevent any ostentation of his **virtus** before men.

Literal historicity

It seems plain from Damian's own evidence that Romuald was not invariably blithe. That he believed, with the entire Christian tradition, that illness could be demonically engendered and cured by accession of the Holy Spirit, is not to be doubted.

NOTES

1. Cantin, op.cit., p.20, draws attention to the influential **Vita Martini**; 27, I.
2. **Matthew** 6:16. Cf. c.52 n.11. Christ continues, "Tu autem cum ieiunas, unge caput tuum, et faciem tuam lava". Romuald is not described as literally observing either aspect of this latter commandment, but anointing has been understood from Biblical times as symbolic of transmission of the Holy Spirit [cf. **Mark** 6:13, 1st **John** 2:20-27, etc.] and Romuald has not only been himself anointed thus by the Spirit but is about to anoint the possessed head of the distressed brother likewise. Damian, however, does not draw out this connection.
3. Insufflation was in fact a rite used throughout the early and medaieval periods of Christianity for exorcism, rites of catechumens, and baptism, as well as in the blessing of fonts and chrism. Damian cannot, therefore, have regarded it as intrinsically comic. It is still used in some Roman Catholic and other rituals. Cf. J.G. Davies, "Insufflation", in A. Richardson and J. Bowden (eds.), **A New Dictionary of Christian Theology** (London, 1983); also F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (eds.), **The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church**, second edition (London, 1974).
4. Respectively cc. 22, 23 and 30, 40, 13 and 14, 7, 31 and 35.
5. Cassiodorus had recorded that the exhalation of an elephant, which could be provided upon request to the beast, was known as a remedy for headache. Cf. Davis, op.cit., p.53. Damian shows no awareness of this cure, but it is possible that he knew of, or suspected, some similarity between Romuald's breathing method and a superstitious remedy. If so, this would be a further reason for him first to record the saint's act as an apparent jest and then prove that in his application it was in fact quite

Christian.

6. VR p.96 n.1.
7. Cf. J. Fontaine, ed., Sources Chrétiennes, No. 135, **Sulpice Sévère, Vie de saint Martin**, 27, I, tome 3, pp. 1103-1106.

CHAPTER 54 HE CURES A MADMAN WITH A KISS

A single story appears to underlie this chapter also, but in this case without separate editorial passages:

> A certain man suffered such mental illness[1] that he lost the sense of reason [and] all knowledge of how to behave and how to speak [intelligibly]. Romuald did nothing to this [man] other than merely offer him a kiss. Instantly it recalled him to his previous soundness. As he made peace with this disturbed[2] person, [Romuald] brought him back to peace of mind [within] himself. And having been cured, [the man] used afterwards to tell [of it], saying, "When I obtained [the favour][3] of touching the blessed man's sacred lips, I immediately felt as though a powerful breath of wind[4] came out of his mouth. It blew over my whole face and indeed my very head and instantly chased away all the burning heat from my seething brain."

Damian's argument

A number of important contemplative concepts and images are brought together in this highly significant cure. The mental condition that is cured is particularly important. Whereas the headache of the previous chapter appears to have been simply a headache, however unsettling of contemplative rest, and the cure therefore comparatively inconsequential, told of to show the cheerfulness of the healer, Damian now describes an insanity suggestive of full demonic possession. The **inquietus** sufferer is in a state antithetical to the contemplative's **quies** and **pax**, his **mens** controlled not by the simple **ardor** of Christian love, as the rational soul should be, but by a chaotic **ardor**. The reader is perhaps intended to recognise his condition as the invasion of demonic **cogitationes** like those that have tempted Romuald (in his case unsuccessfully) in chapters 7, 16 and 17.[5] The saint who has been rapt into Heaven and lives in a rapture-like silence[6] can now dispense **virtus** that easily expels these forces and extends to their victim the peace in which he himself lives and

restores him to an **incolomitas pristina** suggestive of salvation.

This is effected when Romuald extends his love to the madman in a kiss. Such kisses are enjoined on Christians repeatedly in the Epistles. **1st Peter**, for example, ends with the instruction, "**Salutate invicem in osculo caritatis. Pax vobis omnibus, qui estis in Christo.**"[7] Peace is thus transmitted from Romuald to the madman as this commandment is acted upon. As the cured man later tells the story, however, he is not satisfied to mention the kiss but draws attention to the very lips that make it and the breath he feels on his un-serene face. The significance of lips as organs of praise and instruction has already been considered in relation to chapter 46.[8] As the silent Romuald preaches by his life rather than his tongue, so the fruit of his lips by which he praises God is the **virtus** dispensed through him to restore the spiritually corrupt to peace with God. The transmitted breath of Romuald's life is again the Holy Spirit, as in the previous chapter. This time, however, there is no suggestion of jest about his exhalation of it.

Damian's sources

The chapter is clearly built on contemplative concepts and Biblical allusions. As it could not be deduced, however, an oral healing story must also underlie it, but in this case, unlike the previous chapter and the next one, both of which contain healing stories with appended statements of Damian's interpretation of the methods used, the content and vocabulary have been so thoroughly edited that if the words and images directly contributing to Damian's argument were removed, virtually nothing would remain. The exact form and function of the story Damian heard are therefore irrecoverable, although it may have

been a straightforward miracle story. There is again no necessary connection with Sitria, and in this case it is not even specified that the man was a monk.

Literal historicity

There seems no reason to doubt that Romuald offered the holy kiss of peace enjoined in the Epistles. That this was perceived as a source of peace to those who resorted to him is probable.

NOTES

1. Capitis insania.
2. Inquietus; cf. c.1 n.12.
3. Merui.
4. Or "exhalation of breath"; aure spiritus.
5. On these concepts cf. c.1 nn. 3 & 12.
6. Cf. cc. 50-52.
7. 1st **Peter** 5:14.
8. Cf. c.46 section (ii).

CHAPTER 55 HE CURES A BROTHER OF ELEPHANTIASIS

Again a single story is told in this chapter. The last sentence is an editorial comment on it.

Damian's argument

(i) Cold water effects the cure.

> At another time again, the same Gregory as above endured such a rank and rotten scabies on the legs that he in fact believed that [this] so serious swelling came from the disease of elephantiasis. For this [man], Romuald prescribed this special kind of medicine; namely that he soak his legs in cold water for three days. He promised that in this way he would recover [his] former health. There is no doubt, however, that [the man] applied himself to carrying this out more out of the coercion of [being] ordered than out of confidence that he would receive his cure. [What happened was] quite wonderul and to be ascribed to divine power[1] alone: the swelling of the shins was rapidly reversed, all the acrid fluid was dried up and the brother was restored to health in all respects, his illness all discarded.

(ii) This is like the cure of Naaman.

> It is therefore reasonable to believe that Romuald ordered the disciple to soak his swollen legs three times in water in the same spirit in which Elisha commanded Naaman the leper to be washed seven times in the Jordan.

By these last lines Damian ensures that the reader will not be distracted from the significance of the miracle by mere wonder at it. He later explained Naaman's cure allegorically:

> **Quid autem per allegoriam, Naaman Syrus, nisi genus designat humanum? Sicut enim Naaman ante leprosus, mox ut septies aqua Iordanis abluitur, ab omni leprae squalore purgatur, ita mundanus populus septem charismata illius columbae percipiens, quae supra Dominum in Iordane descendit, per sacri baptismatis lavacrum contagia deposuit peccatorum.**[2]

Gregory, similarly, may be taken as representative of a class rather than just himself, although in his case, as he is a **discipulus**,

perhaps the class of Romuald's direct and indirect followers in the monastic life rather than of the whole human race. His physical corruption is likely to stand again for their **contagia peccatorum.**

Rather than baptism proper, the cure symbolised in this case is probably the fulfilment of the implications of the "second baptism" of monastic conversion. Some of Damian's comment on Barzillai the Gileadite already cited in relation to chapter 52 may again be adduced to explain his meaning here:

> **Sunt namque nonnulli qui regem David, hoc est Salvatorem nostrum sequentes, Iordanis fluenta transmittunt; hoc est, vel baptismi suscipiunt sacramentum, vel, quod secundum est lavacrum, arripiunt spirituale propositum ... Sed hi veste variata, non mente, habitum mutando, non animum, ad pristinos redeunt mores et saeculares repetunt actiones...** [3]

Although Gregory has technically made his monastic conversion already, he evidently has not yet fulfilled it. Romuald's prescription represents thorough immersion in the saving power of the religion on which he has entered. The three days are prescribed probably because the water of baptism is typologically related to the dwelling-place of the sea-monster Leviathan, type of evil. Christ was commonly depicted as descending into this watery hell for the three days from Crucifixion to Resurrection to crush the evil power and so effect redemption, and the baptised person was held to descend with Him.[4] If this is so, then Gregory is to be cured of his corruption by the perennial Christian principle of dying and rising again with Christ, after its monastic interpretation of fulfilling the religious life.

His unenthusiastic response to Romuald's prescription suggests that the reason why he has not done so already is that he is not confident

that salvation from sin is to be gained in this way. It is his good fortune to have to do so because he is under obedience to Romuald, a prophet of the Holy Spirit comparable to Elisha and proven right by results.

Damian's sources

The patient's lack of faith in the prescription is reminiscent of the story of Naaman's own cure. As elephantiasis and leprosy were commonly associated[5], however, and Naaman's cure was very well known this is not necessarily evidence of redaction by Damian; earlier brethren might very well have seen the similarity. Significant as it is, moreover, this story, in contrast to that of the previous chapter, is not built on contemplative vocabulary to the point that it would collapse altogether if the significant words were removed. A miraculous healing story would remain in this case. There is therefore no reason to doubt that the story is still in roughly the form in which Damian heard it.

Literal historicity

It is not unlikely that Romuald was confronted by such a case of elephantiasis or that relief from it was attributed to his saintly intervention within his own lifetime. It does not seem possible, however, to determine how true to the historical Romuald the story may be. This is the second time in the **Life** that he has effected a cure by prescription[6] but the evidence is too slight to answer the question whether he understood himself to have any kind of healing mission. It certainly seems that Damian, who has announced in the prologue that he will not tell of many of Romuald's miracles, was really interested in any such story only if it had allegorical or typological significance

relevant to his own argument.

NOTES

1. Potestas.
2. **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1123D.
3. Cf. c.52 section (ii).
4. Cf. J. Daniélou, trans. W. Hibberd, **From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers** (London, 1960), pp. 73, 80 and 83-84.
5. Tabacco, VR p.97 n.3 notes a confusion between elephantiasis and leprosy in the **Vitae patrum.** R.K. Harrison explains such confusion in an article on leprosy in **The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible** (vol. for K-Q, p.113), noting that elephantiasis appears in the Septuagint itself as a form of lepra. He adds, "In mediaeval European medical writings, the Vulgate rendering lepra was employed as a designation of elephantiasis Graecorum, so that the symptoms of this much-feared affliction were associated with what was recorded about ... lepra in the Scriptures."
6. Cf. the tooth of c.46.

CHAPTER 56 ENGELBERT CURSES HIMSELF WITH ESTRANGEMENT FROM ROMUALD

This composite chapter may be divided historiographically into four: (i) the opening sentence, in which carnal men maliciously refuse to accept the true nature of Romuald's work; (ii) the second to fourth sentences, in which Romuald knows of a brother's sinful intentions by prophetic insight; (iii) the fifth to seventh sentences, in which Engelbert curses himself in rejecting the prophecy; (iv) the last sentence, in which he is permanently estranged from Romuald.

Damian's argument

The chapter is introduced by a generalising summary:

(i) Romuald is again accused of levity.

> No small number of carnal men were nonetheless[1] unafraid to find fault with him maliciously and attribute his sayings and his deeds to the vice of levity.

The next several lines lead towards an example of such malice:

(ii) A disciple decides to undertake business during Lent.

> To give an example, a certain disciple of his, who was staying in another hermitage some distance away, once submitted to coercion from his kin and, unwilling though he was, eventually agreed to go to Rome on an errand of theirs during the Lenten period. The sainted man immediately realised this through the spirit [and] wrote, displeased as he was, to a certain brother [who] assisted [him] that it was clear that that good man presumed to go to Rome on business of this kind. Now as [the assistant] wondered over [the source] from which the master [had] ascertained this, since it was clear that he had conversed with no one who had come from anywhere else, he inquired attentively into the matter and confirmed that it was just as the venerable man had said.

Damian held that the eremitical life was a development of Lent[2] and

characteristically a Lenten **conversatio.** Leaving the Lenten hermitage, therefore, is tantamount to reversion to the world. Having proved the point that Romuald prophesied this particular regression, however, neither the brother nor Damian follows up the disciple who is about to go astray. He disappears from the story, which turns to the malicious reaction of unbelieving Engelbert:

(iii) Engelbert curses himself in denying Romuald's prophecy.

> He went to another fellow-disciple of his, namely Engelbert, who was staying enclosed, and stated straightforwardly both that the master had said this and that without doubt he had the spirit of prophecy. [Engelbert], however, rejected [this] outright, full of execrations. He castigated the brother and, [on the grounds] that this was untrue, bound himself in the chains of a curse: "If that man said this by the spirit of prophecy", he said, "and not instead by the devil, may almighty God not permit me to continue in this reclusion". No sooner said than done.

Thus Engelbert follows the scribes and Pharisees and commits the unforgivable sin. **"Beelzebul habet"**, and **"In principe daemonum eiecit daemonia"**, those infamous sinners had said of Christ.[3] Engelbert does not imitate them exactly, in that his comment is not made in direct reaction to a healing story, but, like them, he ascribes the work of God - in this prophecy - to the devil, and so blasphemes against the Holy Spirit.

> "'**Amen dico vobis**", Christ had responded, according to Mark, "... **qui ... blasphemaverit in Spiritum Sanctum, non habet remissionem in aeternum, sed reus est aeterni delicti'. Quoniam dicebant: 'Spiritum immundum habet.'**"; or, according to Matthew, "**Qui non est mecum, contra me est; et qui non congregat mecum, spargit. Ideo dico vobis: ... Spiritus blasphemia non remittetur ... neque in hoc saeculo neque in futuro**".[4]

The age to come and Engelbert's scattering of disciples will be dealt with in the next chapter. Damian first finishes the present chapter by recording Engelbert's punishment in this world:

(iv) His reclusion is broken.

> For after only a few days Engelbert left, his reclusion broken without the master's permission, and, so it is said, he never saw him again in this life.

This punishment is the antithesis of the restoration to peace, soundness of mind and good health told of in the previous three chapters, where men have been gathered into the spiritual state of the silent saint following his rapture. Because of his malicious refusal to accept the Holy Spirit in Romuald, Engelbert is unable even to continue in the reclusion he has already attained as his disciple. The punishment is implicit in the crime: the disciple who rejects God's prophecy in Romuald rejects God and casts himself from the saving presence as surely as any monk who leaves the Lenten hermitage to return to the business of the world.

Damian's sources

After the generalising summary of the opening section, two originally unrelated stories seem to have been conflated in this chapter.

The first of them, constituting the second section, is incomplete, as remarked above. Presumably it originally carried on to make a point of monastic interest about the fate of the brother who proposed leaving his cell during Lent, or about Romuald's intervention in his case. Damian tells just as much of it as is relevant to his own point.

The other story belongs with some of the material of the next chapter, telling of a dispute or rivalry between Romuald and Engelbert at San Vincenzo. Both the third and fourth sections of this chapter carry

this story, but it is questionable whether they are of equal status. For if the reference to the "few days" is omitted from the fourth, there remains a simple and self-sufficient statement that Engelbert left his discipleship to Romuald in bad grace and was never in contact with him again. The third section, on the other hand, telling of Romuald's assistant's statement to Engelbert and the self-maledictory response, is a "bridge" passage which cannot stand without both the second and fourth sections that it links. It seems likely, therefore, that it developed as these stories came to be paired.

As Damian was writing at the monastery mentioned in the next chapter, it does not seem likely that this conflation and linking passage were hitherto unknown to the brethren and originate with him. In the next chapter it becomes evident that Engelbert was no less strict an ascetic than Romuald and that brethren resorted to him too as a master of the eremitical **conversatio**. This suggests two possible reasons for the conflation to have been made in the telling of the stories at the house before Damian's sojourn there: that Engelbert challenged Romuald's status as "prophet" in the sense of exponent of God's will for men's lives, a party loyal to Romuald subsequently proving the saint's authenticity by reference to one verifiable prophecy that Engelbert could deny only maliciously; or, as the next chapter suggests, that a disciple who was dissatisfied with Romuald's regime sought satisfaction in Engelbert's hermitage instead, thereby setting off a competition between the two masters' reputations that could not be settled in Romuald's favour unless Engelbert were shown to be false and his apparent sanctity in fact incompatible with the true prophet's.

Literal historicity

The next chapter clearly indicates that Engelbert did not in fact break his reclusion so much as establish another hermitage.

It is probable that Romuald regarded a brother's proposal to waive the strict observances of Lent as a very serious matter.

NOTES

1. I.e., in spite of the miracles just described.
2. And its types. Cf. Op.15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, c.2, "De origine vitae eremiticae", PL145, 337C-338A; also c.32, **De quadragesima**. Cf. also c.67 n.2. below.
3. **Mark** 3:22.
4. **Mark** 3:28-30; **Matthew** 12:30-31.

CHAPTER 57 GAUDENTIUS LEAVES ROMUALD FOR ENGELBERT AND IS EXCLUDED FROM THE CELESTIAL ALTAR

Five divisions may be made in this chapter also: (i) the first sentence (to p.98 1.22), introducing Gaudentius; (ii) the second to fifth sentences (to p.99 1.13), in which he leaves Romuald to fast more stringently with Engelbert; (iii) the sixth and seventh sentences (to p.99 1.17), in which he dies and prayer for him is interdicted; (iv) the eighth to fifteenth sentences, in which a vision of him in misery cures a tooth-ache; (v) the last two sentences.

Damian's argument

Damian begins by introducing the protagonist:

(i) Gaudentius is very ardent.

> Another brother, named Gaudentius, [who was] in fact the father of the abbot of this monastery of San Vincenzo, was converted with great fervour [and] thereafter conducted his conversation in God's service in a quite ardent spirit.

(ii) He leaves Romuald to fast more rigorously under Engelbert.

> Because this man wished, at a certain time, to give up all cooked foods and, satisfied with bread and water, subsist [on these] and fruit or raw vegetables, he one day sought permission from the blessed Romuald [to do so]. And so this [was] obtained, [but] as he continued indefatigably on in this way of life, a certain other brother, Tedaldus, [who] indiscreetly pitied his frailty, took it on himself to go to the master and suggested that because the brother concerned could not bear so heavy a burden[1], this persistence of his ought to be quite broken. Now Romuald, as a simple-hearted man[2], gave [his] assent to Tedaldus's opinion and withdrew his permission for such a life from Gaudentius. But [Gaudentius] took [this] very hard[3], [and] would not suffer living with Tedaldus any longer by any means in the hermitage in which Romuald had put them, but [rather] made himself subordinate to Engelbert, who had been separated from Romuald, and received consent for the aforesaid

conversation from him.

Damian thus prepares the way for the main point of the chapter with a somewhat confused and incoherent argument. For although he tries to ascribe the indiscretion in the matter to Tedaldus alone and credit Romuald with the virtue of simplicity, there is no avoiding the inference that a simplicity which leads a master to accept and act upon indiscreet counsel from an inferior is itself indiscreet and hardly a mark of sanctity.[4] Similarly, it is clear that Gaudentius breaks the cardinal monastic rule of obedience, a point which Romuald makes himself in the next section, and yet Damian so plays on the image of weight-bearing as virtually to imply that Gaudentius really had difficulty coping with the impact of being told he must relax his fast: **"tam grave pondus** (the fast) **portare non posset"**, thought Tedaldus, but it is in fact his **"graviter ferens"** the saint's order that overwhelms his **infirmitas**, and to this extent Romuald is to blame and the disobedience is not entirely the sinner's own fault. Damian is trying to have it both ways in both cases because Romuald has to be in the wrong at this stage for the chapter to be able to make its concluding point, to which he is leading up, but Romuald is nonetheless still the saint of the story.

(iii) Romuald interdicts prayer for him when he dies.

> And in this way did this Gaudentius not long afterwards die, and he was buried in the cemetery of the blessed Vincent next to the body of [that] venerable man, Berardus, who had similarly been Romuald's disciple. Romuald, however, totally interdicted [any] prayer being made for him because he had finished [his] life in the sin of disobedience.

(iv) A brother has a vision of him in misery.

> Now some time later, a certain monk of the aforesaid community, while celebrating the morning holy office [Lauds] with the other brethren, suddenly began to feel so sharp a pain in [his] teeth that he was quite unable to remain any longer in the choir for the psalmody. He left immediately [and] lay himself, groaning, on Berardus and Gaudentius's sepulchre. And as he prayed there, lying [down], for some time, sleep then pressed [itself upon] him. Immediately he saw Berardus, quite plainly, arrayed most splendidly in priestly adornments, holding in [his] hands a book written in golden letters, standing in fact before an altar and celebrating the rites of the mass. And he descried Gaudentius mourning, standing sadly away far behind Berardus's back, face downcast, not daring - as though excommunicated - to approach the sacred mysteries. He then spoke to him, saying, "You see, brother, that wondrously gilded book of Berardus's? I too would now have such a book, altogether [certainly], if - alas, alas - the monk Tedaldus had not taken it from me". And immediately the brother awoke, safe and sound, all his pain cast off, and arose. He afterwards joyfully told the brethren of his vision, in the order [in which he had seen it].

"**Dens putridus**", as noted in relation to chapter 46, "**qui sperat super infideli in die angustiae.**"[5] As with his unnamed predecessor, the secular priest who has had to leave off cell-building until his tooth-ache has been cured, the unnamed sufferer of the present chapter is not said to have in fact so misplaced his hope; but it is implicit in the context that he is tempted to go the way of Gaudentius, and his miserable exclusion from God's praise indicates that he is not participating in the joyous **salus**, at once physical and spiritual, into which the rapt Romuald has been drawing men. He is cured when his vision of the contrasting fates of brethren loyal and disloyal to Romuald removes any further possibility of his misplacing his hope.

This argument, however, straightforward as it is to this extent, is clouded in the same way as that of the second section: Gaudentius, now in a position to see his condition all too clearly with supernatural insight, puts the blame for his disobedience not on himself but on Tedaldus, and implicitly on Romuald, for forcing him into it. Damian comments further on this responsibility of Romuald's in the conclusion:

(v) Romuald restores the beatitude he has taken away.

> [When] Romuald heard this, he immediately ordered the brethren that they should now dispense brotherly love for Gaudentius and earnestly pray for him. From this it is inferred - not without reason - that he who, [when] deprived of Romuald's society, lost the book that he had merited, merited to recover that book now that he was restored by grace and lifted up by prayer; and what Tedaldus had taken away only through Romuald, Romuald would now return by praying, together with all the brethren, on his behalf.

In this conclusion Damian implicitly argues a monastic theology of mediated grace. Gaudentius's fate depends not upon his moral condition - in the end his disobedience damns him no more than his fasting has saved him - but whether he is "in" with the saint and the religious community, or "out". In this, Romuald is once again a deputy of Christ.[6] No sinner can be reconciled to God the Father except by partaking, under grace, in the life, death and resurrection of God the Son; he is thus "justified", or rendered righteous, takes on the nature of Christ and is enabled to enter Heaven and stand before God's perfect righteousness as a son by adoption. That Romuald has been blessed with such grace is implicit in his rapture of chapters 50 and 51. His disciples may then partake of it through himself. Thus Berardus may stand before a heavenly altar, in a place appropriate to his master who has been rapt into Heaven while standing before an altar, but Gaudentius cannot approach it. His disobedience prevents him not because it is an unforgivable moral fault - Damian clearly lays the blame on Romuald and his indiscretion - but because it breaks the chain of association by which justification is transmitted. Gaudentius has associated himself instead with the madness of Engelbert, who rejects the Holy Spirit in Romuald. Gaudentius "**meruerat**" his book when he had been Romuald's disciple and "**meruit**" it again when restored to his rightful community by grace through the saint; such "merit" is indeed a Pauline imputed merit, a

divine gift, not an earned reward.

At first sight this suggests that Romuald has a despotic power to save or condemn the brethren in his charge at his own discretion, and to some extent that may in fact be how Damian understood his status; he may share in the apostolic commission, **"Quorum remiseritis peccata, remissa sunt eis; quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt."**[7] It may be noted, however, that Heaven does not allow Romuald to make a mistake. The vision by which he is indirectly informed is virtually miraculous, an act of celestial intervention. Romuald learns that Gaudentius is now contrite[8], that he wishes to rejoin Romuald's community of disciples, and this is not refused him. Brotherly love is extended to him in prayer and thus he is saved. Damian almost certainly intends it to be understood that the saint, although now himself in Heaven, and his communities of disciples, although now physically separated from him, are still channels of such grace.[9]

Damian's sources

This chapter has clearly been derived in the main from the brethren of San Vincenzo. The five sections, however, are not entirely homogeneous. There are two main stories and three shorter passages to tie them together.

The opening sentence, identifying Gaudentius, is clearly an introductory editorial summary.

The second section, in which Gaudentius leaves Romuald for Engelbert, is part of the same memory of a dispute between Romuald and Engelbert,

or parties loyal to them, that has figured in the previous chapter. Although Damian has his own reasons to present Romuald as being in the wrong at this point, there is no sign that he has had to distort his source material to do so. The community presided over by Gaudentius's son, that is to say, perhaps still favoured Engelbert[10], as a superior master of the ascetic life. This story could be told in memory of the dispute without necessarily leading on to the information recorded in the rest of the chapter.

The link is made by the third section, recording the burial and interdict; a second editorial summary.

The second main story, concerning the vision, has clearly been adapted for its present context. Even as it stands it tells of the miraculous cure of an unnamed brother, and that is likely to have been its principal function in an earlier stage of its transmission, little interested in the literal tooth though Damian may be. The tomb on which the afflicted lies is in fact jointly Berardus's and Gaudentius's, and if the miracle was not originally attributed to both of them, it seems very likely indeed that it was at least attributed to celestial Berardus, not the still-earthbound Romuald, and that Gaudentius's infelicity was scarcely of interest; perhaps indeed deduced later from the mere fact that he was not seen with Berardus. However this may be, an abbreviated version of this story could be told without reference to either Romuald or Gaudentius.

The final section, making Damian's main point of the chapter in relation to Romuald's mediatorship, is clearly editorial in its present form. The lifting of the interdict apparently belongs with its imposition in the third section. As Tabacco notes, however, this

final section is analagous to a point in St. Gregory's **Life of St. Benedict**[11]; in which case the interdict may have been told of or supposed in relation to Gaudentius's self-dissociation from Romuald and its lifting here deduced perhaps by Damian himself, under the normative influence of the father of Latin monks.

Literal historicity

What in fact happened with Gaudentius and Engelbert seems beyond recall. It is interesting to read Damian's implicit admission, however, that Romuald was rejected not only by lax brethren but also by at least one seeking a stricter ascetic observance.

NOTES

1. Pondus.
2. Vir simplicis animi.
3. More literally, another weight image: "bearing [this] heavily"; graviter ferens.
4. Cf. Romuald's "indiscreta simplicitas" in excluding himself too long from the altar in chapter 50.
5. Cf. c.46 section (ii).
6. Cf. Ward, op.cit., p.170.
7. **John** 20:23.
8. Although not exactly morally repentant. He regrets only the loss of his reward, not his act of disobedience for itself. He is applying for salvation rather than earning it.
9. This may shed further light on the claim of chapter 37 that Romuald was thought to want to associate the whole people to the monastic order.
10. It may be significant that the only punishment of Engelbert that Damian has been able to record is that he was cut off from Romuald. Evidently the only story of celestial disapproval he could find was this one about the disciple.
11. **Dialogues**, Book II, c.23.

CHAPTER 58 A PRESUMPTUOUS BROTHER IS TORMENTED BY DEMONS IN ROMUALD'S BED

This shorter chapter appears to be of unitary origin:

> One day the venerable man arranged, because of some necessity, to go on the road, and entrusted [his] cell to one of the disciples, instructing him to stay in it until he returned. [The man], however, [was] rash, [and] as he did not observe the reverence due in the master's honour, he did not hesitate to lie boldly in his bedding. And lo, that very night, evil spirits savagely threw themselves upon him, abraded him with the very heaviest of blows and left him, tossed from the bed, almost half dead. For indeed, to endure such insolent avengers of his sin [was his just] deserts, as he had sinned against so [great] a man by discarding [his] humility; and as he showed no reverence to the pious master, [it was] at hard and impious hands [that] he experienced discipline.[1] Now a little later the venerable man was similarly about to undertake a journey [and] left another disciple in the same cell. When the disciple said to him, "Master, I shall not lie in your bed, because I am afraid that what happened to someone else will consequently befall me too," he replied, "My son, lie [there] and sleep secure; for that [man] who lolled about in it fell into enemy hands for the reason that he did not receive permission from me, insignificant [though I am]. You, however, [as you] have received consent, put [your] hope in God and rest without fear." He indeed lay in it, just as he had been ordered, and encountered the incidence of no adversity at all.

Damian's argument

By this allegorical chapter Damian adds a **caveat** to the message of its predecessor: the brethren may indeed have confidence in salvation with Romuald, but they must not fall into presumption. For the cell, as so many times previously, may be taken as symbolic of the eremitism itself[2]; when Romuald is physically absent from his disciples (as he is permanently by the time of writing), they may dwell nonetheless in the inmost recesses of what he has edified for himself; it is indeed entrusted to their keeping. The rest that is to be enjoyed there is representative, also as previously, of contemplation itself[3]; he who lies in the saint's bed is as his bedfellow in the very essence of his

sanctity. The disciples are not worthy of this. One who humbly recognises the fact and reverentially accepts this association in sanctity as a specially granted privilege may put his hope in God and rest secure. One who arrogantly presumes on it will find that he has associated himself not with his master's hard-won victory but with the distress of the most evil tempting that hell reserves for God's special champions. Such a disciple will rapidly discover that he is not his master's equal and cannot remain in his place when such a force of temptation attacks. He will learn his humility the hard way, in the misery of spiritual defeat.

Damian's sources

Because this story can be construed as pure allegory, it is of the kind that Damian could honestly "make up". As with the parables of the Gospels (universally interpreted allegorically since antiquity), the veracity of such a story depends not on whether any such event ever actually occurred but simply on whether the message conveyed is true. Although it remains possible that Damian heard the present story told at San Vincenzo or some other monastery, as spiritual masters before him may certainly have wished to make the same point, and even that it originated in an actual event, there is simply no detail - in sharp contrast to the stories of the previous chapter - that would tie down its origin or transmission to any place, time or person. It may also be remarked that it works perfectly as a single and coherent narrative, with none of the joins or hiccups evident in most of the chapters composed of various fragments of pre-existing information.

NOTES

1. Disciplina; simultaneously chastisement, flogging and instruction.
2. Cf. c.3 n.3 & chapter 61 section (ii).
3. Cf. c.1 n.12. On the spiritual significance of beds, cf. c.22 n.5.

CHAPTER 59 A MAD OPPONENT IS CURED BY ROMUALD'S VICARIOUS BENEDICTION

The basis of this chapter appears to be a single miracle story, but it is divided in two by a general remark on such benedictions. The chapter therefore falls into three: (i) the first three sentences (to p.101 1.24), where the cause of the madness is explained; (ii) the fourth to seventh sentences (to p.102 1.6) - the remark on benedictions; (iii) the remainder of the chapter, describing the cure.

Damian's argument

(i) Arduin's wife is mad with Romuald for taking her husband from her.

> A certain layman, named Arduin, gave himself over to Romuald to receive the habit of the holy conversation. He then returned home to dispose of all his property. And when his wife saw him coming, she shouted at him, no doubt inflamed by a female fury, "So, [my] good man, you come now from that heretic and old seducer and you are leaving me wretched and destitute of all human support, [are you]?" And having said this, she immediately turned mad and began so to rave and to shake as if she were openly tormented by a demon.

This representative of vociferous Italian womanhood indeed speaks - when regarded from a monastic point-of-view - as though possessed. In identifying the saint as "**antiquus seductor**" she labels him with a title appropriate to the devil, showing that she suffers from the same radical confusion between good and evil that has disturbed Engelbert in chapter 56. In consequence, "**in amentiam vertitur**", which may be more literally translated, "she was turned into [being] out of [her] mind." This is the antithesis of the peace and soundness of **mens** that characterises the holy **conversatio** on which her husband wishes to enter - the state of being permanently turned or **conversus** to God, of

living **ad Deum**. Unlike Engelbert, however, she has not directly slandered the Spirit in Romuald and her sin turns out to be forgivable. First, the means of forgiveness is introduced:

(ii) Romuald's blessings are transmitted in bread and fruit.

> Now the sainted man had a custom of this kind: that whenever he sent brethren on the road, he would give them in benediction bread or fruit or something else. From this - as they had proven it many times - the disciples held [it to be] certain that if they offered [something] from the master's benediction to anyone ill, they would recall that person unharmed to good health.[1] For many sick [people] were often restored to health by even the water in which his hands were washed. This had to be done very cautiously, however, for if the sainted man should become at all aware of it he would fall into a most oppressive unhappiness.

(iii) Such a blessing cures the madwoman.

> When, therefore, the wife had been wretchedly tormented for a long time, certain brethren who were there gave her a piece of bread they had received from the master in benediction. Then, when the woman had eaten this [her] mind [was] immediately calmed [and] she was restored, quite free from all the frenzy of insanity. She at once returned thanks to almighty God and to Romuald His attendant and no longer denied her husband permission for his conversion.

The woman has made the mistake of thinking that, because she will be physically separated from her husband, she will be left wretched, "**destituta omni humano solatio.**" In fact, as in so many instances already in the **Life**, the **virtus** of the saint flows out beyond the boundaries of the hermitage and she becomes one of its beneficiaries. Romuald's disciples carry it abroad in the form of benedictions made upon themselves, but it does not stick to them; it is further transmissible. So, as her husband prepares to join the brotherhood of Romuald's disciples, this woman is so drawn into the brethren's charitable care as to be blessed with no mere human consolation but with the supreme solace from God Himself - mediated through the saint

and then through his followers - that leaves her rejoicing, tranquil of **mens**, entirely freed from any demonic power to cause her misery. She is indeed already participating in the cheery serenity and immunity to the demons that is the mark of Romuald's sanctity and presumably the goal of her husband's conversion.

As with previous blessings, there is no reason to believe that similar benefits have ceased since Romuald's transition to Heaven. The woman is probably to be understood as representative of yet another category of Christians.

Damian's sources

There are two points of internal evidence that suggest that this story did not always have quite the form it now has. One is that there is an unexplained delay between the onset of the woman's madness and the disciples' proffering of the blessed bread; the cure was not an immediate reaction to a sudden event. The other is that Romuald ought to have been aware that his would-be convert's wife was proving obstructive and yet, having initially accepted Arduin, he is presented as taking no further interest in the case, either personally or through his disciples. Indeed, what these latter do in his name they must conceal from him, although in the next chapter he himself will cure a possessed boy in the same way. Taken together, these points suggest that the story was originally simply a miracle story of the healing, in the manner described, of a woman known to have been mad for some time, perhaps regarded as intractably so, whose husband was subsequently a monk of San Vincenzo or one of the other communities associated with the name of Romuald. In such a case, the identification of an uncomprehending opposition to monastic conversion

as the cause of the madness could easily be made by monks, who would thus enable themselves to read into the cure a greatly heightened significance and perhaps even use it as a kind of precedent in subsequent cases of difficulties over wives.

Literal historicity

As Tabacco notes[2], the matter of spouses' consent had been taken seriously in monastic circles at least since the time of Cassian. There is no reason to doubt that problems of this kind arose from time to time in the hermitages associated with Romuald.

The belief that indirect contact with living holy men through various means, including articles of clothing and even shadows, could be efficacious to heal is attested in the Bible itself[3] and is a hagiographical commonplace. It is therefore very likely that the miracle story Damian records originated in a dramatic event. How he understood such a cure to work is the real subject of the next chapter.

NOTES

1. Salus; connotations of salvation.
2. VR p.102n.2.
3. Cf., e.g., **Mark** 5:25-34 and **Acts** 5:15.

CHAPTER 60 A POSSESSED BOY IS CURED IN A SIMILAR MANNER

Although short, this chapter may be divided historiographically in two: (i) the first three sentences (to p.102 l.15), in which the cure is described; (ii) the final sentence, in which Damian comments on it.

Damian's argument

(i) The boy is cured.

> At another time a certain demoniac boy was borne to the blessed man. [Romuald] did nothing to him other than give him a piece of bread as a benediction to him. As soon as the boy ate this, he was immediately freed from the demon by it.

Insofar as this is simply the record of another healing it is almost superfluous. It has already been demonstrated in chapter 54 that Romuald concerned himself to cure madmen personally - in that case by breathing the Spirit onto the afflicted in a kiss. It has just been shown in the previous chapter that a cure might alternatively be made by blessed bread. Damian has stated in his prologue that he will not relate many miracles because it is not edifying to do so but will concentrate instead on the saint's **conversatio**, and to this point he has been true to his word; every miracle so far described has been in some way didactic about the saint's religious life or about his relationship with his followers. As the present miracle is the second of its kind, it has therefore probably been included as a note on its predecessor; Damian has not really explained how or why a cure might be effected through blessed bread.

An explanation is implicit in the Eucharistic connotations of this chapter. Such connotations have not been so clear in the previous

case because the blessed bread was not intended for its recipient nor administered in response to any piety on her behalf, but here, when the boy is deliberately brought before the representative of the divine and is directly handed a small piece of blessed bread, the ministration appears thoroughly priestly. The particular words used carry the association further. Already in chapter 50 it has been seen that when Romuald was rapt into Heaven he was "**oblatus**" before God, a word which does not simply mean "carried" but has connotations of "offered". As he was saying mass at the time, it was suggested that it was as though he was himself accepted into Heaven alongside the sacrifice of the mass. This mad boy is now "**delatus**" to Romuald, and in being presented to the saint in this way he too is, in another sense, being offered to God, in the person of His mediator, for God to do with Him what He will. The boy is not refused. The bread suggestive of the Eucharist and therefore of Christ's crucified body is granted in return, and this has the effect of so assimilating the boy to the divine that evil loses its power over him.

It is clear enough that the madwoman of the previous chapter has been cured, in spite of the different circumstances, in the same way. Damian has indeed used virtually the same formula in both cases: "**de benedictione panis ... ei particulam tradiderunt**", and "**pro benedictione sibi panis particulam tradidit.**"[1] She, it is true, has not been in any way presented or offered to God, but her husband has: "**Arduinus ... Romualdo se ad suscipiendum sancte conversationis habitum tradidit,**"[2] and the wife has evidently participated in the benefits. There is a kind of holy trade in bodies in which those who are given over to Christ (in His mediator), willingly or not, receive Him back (through His mediator) and by this means all the madness that

is evil's antagonism to God is expelled from them. The more complex case of the woman is thus annotated by the simpler case of the boy.

Damian adds a final, explicit comment:

(ii) The demon could not withstand Romuald's benediction.

> Rightly, indeed, after Romuald's benediction had entered the badly possessed body, [was] the evil spirit immediately cauterised [and] out it came from there.

It is plain, therefore, whatever the Eucharistic connotations may be, that it is not in fact the Eucharist, or not the Eucharist as such, that effects the miracle; it is Romuald's benediction, transmitted in an analogous fashion. Not every priest could do this, but Romuald the **famulus Dei** can.

Damian's sources

This minimal record of a healing miracle could be a summary of a longer story or, in its present form, an item from some oral catalogue of miracles. It is not unlikely that Romuald has simply jotted down what little he heard, with his own appended comment. As there is no indication of place or time there is no necessary connection with the surrounding chapters.

Literal historicity

As this is the second miracle of its kind, it is all the more probable that food items blessed by Romuald were indeed seen to operate in this way during his lifetime.

NOTES

1. VR p.102 11.8-9 and 11. 15-16.
2. VR p.101 11.16-17.

CHAPTER 61 THE FLEEING DEVIL BREAKS A WALL OF ROMUALD'S CELL

Three historiographical divisions may be identified in this chapter: (i) the first two sentences (to p.103 l.1), an introductory generalising summary; (ii) the remainder of the chapter except for the last sentence, telling the story; (iii) the last sentence, another appended comment from Damian.

Damian's argument

(i) The devil never gives up.

> Never, however, could the devil rest from attacking the sainted man. And because he could achieve nothing against him by concealed deceit, he incessantly showed his venomous[1] malice visibly.

These sentences serve both to conclude the series of healing miracles of chapters 53 to 60, most of which have concerned the diabolical restlessness of insanity and one the literal virus of elephantiasis, and to introduce the open diabolical attacks of the present chapter and the next.

(ii) The devil flees through the wall of Romuald's cell.

> For one day, when the venerable man was in his cell, lo, an evil spirit - how foul, bristly, horrendously immense he truly was - began to strike terror into the sainted man and to menace him with a very great attack of frenzy, threatening him with death. And when Romuald, undaunted, sought help from Heaven and confidently cried out that Christ would succour him, the ancient enemy thereupon fled away [and] struck through the very wall of the cell in such a choleric rage that he split a heavy board of beech for the length of one cubit or even more than that.

This is the first time the devil has attacked Romuald openly since chapter 17. Thoroughly worsted there, he abandoned direct attack and adopted the cunning plan of working instead in those whom Romuald

would save, to enjoy victory in that degree at least. Damian now returns to a story of direct attack, and in a story, moreover, so devoid of information about time and place that it might have been included in that much earlier section of the **Life**. The reason for its appearance only now is probably related to Romuald's rapture in chapters 50 and 51. It has been suggested in relation to chapter 52 that, following the rapture, the saint has advanced to a new plane of **virtus** on which he has become in effect a tempter of demons, rather than the mere victor over tempting demons that he was previously. This is demonstrated, as far as the saint's **conversatio** is concerned, by the one story of his post-rapture fasting (in chapter 52), after which Damian has presented the series of healing and saving miracles, in each of which the saint has operated, explicitly or implicitly, by extending divine **virtus** to a person until then gripped in the power of evil, and in the first of them (in chapter 53) by mocking the "**insidiae antiqui hostis**".[2] In a kind of chiasmus, this second series of conflicts within others is now followed by the return to open confrontation.

In the three previous attacks, in chapters 7, 16 and 17, the demons have attempted to disturb the contemplative quiescence of the saintly **mens**, striking with evil **cogitationes**, but Romuald has succeeded in driving them off with true words of faith. Now, however, the tables are completely turned on the devil; the impenetrable saint deflects the attack of **furor** back onto his assailant such that the devil is himself seized with the same uncontrolled, raging insanity of which he is the author in men and women. He bursts out of the holy cell - once again representative of the essence of eremitism - and of the contemplative heart[3] - with the aimless fury of the utterly thwarted.

Damian completes the chapter by ensuring that attention does not linger too long on the literal cell:

(iii) He thus reveals his true intentions.

> He thus showed openly in the little dwelling how great a flame of cruelty blazed up against the inhabitant, and in a measure left written in the wall what he secretly carried on in [Romuald's] mind.

Damian's sources

Unlike the story of chapter 21, in which Romuald's cell has caught fire while he has been living in it with his disciple William, this account of cell damage has no apparent witness. As it is not likely that Romuald boasted of it himself, it was perhaps deduced by monkish observers of a fault in one of Romuald's cells. Any such fault, it could be reasoned, must be diabolical in origin - the devil is behind everything negative. As such damage could not result from any victory on the devil's part, it must have been caused by his forceful departure. It would have been by invoking the name of Christ that Romuald cast him out, because that is the sure way to do it.[4] One cubit - eighteen to twenty-two inches, that is - is the breadth of a fairly large man, so the devil must have manifested himself as a formidably large antagonist to have caused so wide a split. No information other than the existence of the split would be required. However all this may be, such a story might very well have circulated among admirers of the saint, so there is no reason to ascribe it to Damian himself. There is, however, no evidence to fix its origins in time or place.

Reductionist attempts might be made to rationalise such a story in terms of a fit of frenzy in which a mentally disturbed recluse damaged his own dwelling. It seems more likely, however, that the story, which is similar in tenor to numerous demonic struggle stories dating from the **Life** of Antony onwards, has either been deduced as suggested above or developed as hagiographical embroidery.

NOTES

1. Or "slimy", "stinking"; virus malitie.
2. VR p.96 l.7.
3. Cf. c.3 n.11.
4. Damian teaches elsewhere that lips reddened with the Blood of Christ cause the devil to flee in terror, which may therefore happen daily. Cf. Blum, **Peter Damian**, p.163. He clearly regards the present event as something more extraordinary.

CHAPTER 62 THE DEVIL MANIFESTS HIMSELF AS A RED DOG

This very short chapter is probably derived from a single source without much elaboration:

> At another time again, when the venerable man was riding with his disciples, lo, an evil spirit simulated the appearance of a red dog, spurted with great force into the way, and so frightened the horse on which the sainted man was sitting that he was nearly thrown. [When] the disciples [were] asked whether they had seen him, they declared that they had noticed that the horse was indeed terrified, but they attested that no such thing had appeared to them. Then [Romuald] said, "[How] pitiful he [is] who is known to have once been a splendid angel [but] does not now hesitate to show himself in the guise of a filthy dog."

Damian's argument

The ridden horse is a standard symbol of the passions controlled by reason.[1] The way commonly symbolises the Christian's journey through life. The devil is thus attempting once again to do what he has failed to accomplish in the previous chapter and destroy the contemplative, as he advances on his lifelong progress with his disciples, by an attack of irrational fear that will agitate the passions and unseat the mens. Insofar as it is another such demonic-confrontation story, however, this chapter adds nothing. It has probably been included as a kind of comment on the previous chapter.

For when the devil has broken through the cell wall he has still appeared in a truly horrifying form, enough to strike the most shattering dread into anyone less spiritually robust than Romuald. This is apparently not the way Damian wishes to present him in his final open confrontation with the saint. As the dog, he is still dangerous; the term "dogs" is used repeatedly in the Bible to represent fierce and cruel enemies[2], even in the important Psalm 21, where the psalmist, universally understood, for self-evident reasons,

as prophesying Christ's crucifixion, cries in a single verse, "**circumdederunt me canes multi ... Foderant manus meas et pedes meos**"; and a few verses later, "**Erue ... de manu canis unicam meam**".[3] The dog of the psalm, however, has already been eternally defeated by Christ, and Romuald's participation in His victory has already been thoroughly demonstrated. It is to another aspect of the dog that Damian now alludes, its uncleanness and abjectness, which was also proverbial throughout the tradition from Biblical times[4] and which Romuald has already used in verbally insulting the devil in chapter 7.[5] The hellhound that now appears is presented as almost pathetic. Lucifer the great pretender, who would overthrow God Himself, has been divested of all the power and glory he had under Him in Heaven and is now to be esteemed no more than a cur that vainly barks in bluff. The disciples cannot see him, presumably because they do not have Romuald's saintly percipience (although they can verify the attack through its effects), but no one would so dread this enemy as to flee the field and abandon the Christian struggle if only he could see him now reveal his true degradation; which their master immediately takes the opportunity to remark to them, and indirectly to the reader of the **Life**.

Damian's sources

It is significant that this chapter does not end, as do so many, with an explanatory comment by Damian but instead purports to preserve a statement of Romuald's own. Direct speech by Romuald is found comparatively rarely in the **Life** and generally as an integral part of the narrative; each speech is necessary to the action and clearly distinguishable from the various conclusions drawn from it by the hagiographer. Presumably, therefore, Damian received the final

sentence of this chapter as an integral part of the story. It also functions, however, as a comment on it, and the rest of the story could in fact function satisfactorily without it. This would then be a brief story of a demonic attack on the holy man witnessed, after a fashion, by some of his disciples and told as another proof of his victory when in conflict with the devil, or perhaps to show his superiority over the disciples in discerning spirits, or both. The contrast between the devil's glorious past and ignominious present, which is not even implicit in the event until the comment is added, would not necessarily be remarked. The conclusion, that is to say, appears somewhat extraneous to the story. It seems likely, therefore, that it was not originally the conclusion, nor even a lesson to the disciples, but rather a veracious insult hurled by the protagonist directly at the devil himself as a decisive weapon to drive him off, much like the insults of chapters 7 and 17 and that of the next chapter. If so, Damian has probably recorded approximately what he heard, but slightly abbreviated and recast.

Literal historicity

What Damian heard, however, was not necessarily the original form of the story. There are at least two ways in which such a story could have come into being: from the event and from the statement.

In the former case, a story of a real attack by a red dog has been interpreted as indicative of the saint's spiritual state, perhaps almost from the moment of the event, and the statement about the devil's condition has been put into Romuald's mouth as a decisive insult, as suggested above, or to prevent misunderstanding; however violently the horse may have shied at the apparition, it proves that

Romuald could see through it all along and therefore was not at all troubled by it from his holy serenity. If the story has come into existence this way, then nothing can be learnt about Romuald from it, unless it is indeed accepted as a sign of his spiritual state.

As the characterisation of the devil as a dog was already ancient, however, Romuald's statement is in fact a quite general one that would not require any dramatic event to bring it to his lips, but merely a sermon or some teaching. It is equally possible, therefore, that an authentic saying of Romuald's has given rise to the story. If Romuald knew that the devil could be likened to a dog, it might be reasoned, then, with such saintly insight as his, he would at some time have seen him appear so; he would have been talking of what he knew. Once it had come to be rumoured that Romuald had seen such an apparition, then it would be only a matter of time before a likely narrative setting developed for it (one, like so many before, without any indication of time or place). If the story has come into existence in this way, then the historical Romuald here penetrates the hagiography and speaks in person to the reader of his **Life**.

NOTES

1. Cf. c.15 p.4.
2. Cf. A Cruden, C.H. Irwin and A.D. Adams, **Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments**, revised edition (Guildford and London, 1979), p.157.
3. **Psalm** 21 (22): 17 & 21: "Quoniam circumdederunt me canes multi ... Erue a framea, Deus, animam meam, et de manu canis unicam meam."
4. Cf. c.68 n.3. Also D.E. Nineham, **The Pelican New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel of St. Mark** (Harmondsworth, 1963), p.200.
5. Cf. c.7 section (ii).

CHAPTER 63 DISCORD AMONG ROMUALD'S DISCIPLES IS THE DEVIL'S JOY

A story and a comment on it constitute this chapter. The comment occupies the last sentence (beginning at p.104 l.15), and the rest of the chapter tells the story.

Damian's argument

(i) The devil accompanies discipular discord as though on a drum.

> At yet another time, when he had decreed [1] that the monastery of God's handmaidens that is in Valbona be built, discord thereupon arose among the sainted man's disciples because some in fact refused its being done while others vehemently insisted [on it]. And when both parties to the disagreement were contending before the venerable man, employing various arguments, the devil began incessantly striking a barrel, as if with a hammer, in front of the porch of the cell, and he was heard throughout the wood, [which] echoed [with the noise], thundering out with the rapid pulse of his beating. Afterwards, when all were by now unanimous, harmoniously agreeing that the monastery [would] be built, lo, the evil spirit, heard by them all, howled, wailed and endlessly emitted weeping voices. And finally, when they in time separated and each of them was returning to his lodging[2], the ancient enemy pursued them with such a storm and whirlwind that it was as though he were stirring up all the [various] kinds of wind [and] it was thought that he was pulling out the whole wood by the roots. And one of the brethren rebuked him, saying, "I command you in the name of the Holy Trinity, [you] filthy spirit, to stop following us." And thus he was put to flight.

Although this story raises various questions, Damian's main points in it seem quite obvious. He nonetheless adds an explanatory comment, however, evidently to ensure that attention is not drawn too much to the disciple's marvellous rebuke of the wind but is concentrated instead on the diabolical nature of disharmony between brethren:

(ii) He rejoices in their dispute and is disappointed by its settlement.

> Rightly, indeed, was the author of discord driven, [when] peace was agreed, to break down and weep, [whereas] previously he was heard rejoicing over the growing strife; and he who then tried to remove the ring of the empty container and scatter the parts from which it had been put together, went away sad now that the disciples were bound in the chain of peace and by the fastening of charity.

Once again, as Romuald has gathered men into Christ, the devil tries to scatter them.

Damian's sources

It is most unlikely that a religious authority would "decree" that a convent be built - or anything else be done - and then preside as judge over two parties of his own subordinates disputing whether to obey him or not. The story that appears here is therefore almost certainly not in the form in which Damian heard it. There are at least two possible forms from which he could have adapted it fairly simply.

Perhaps the more probable of the two is one in which the decree, now in the first sentence, appears instead in the third sentence (beginning p.104 l.6). In this case, the building of the convent would be at the initiative of some of the brethren themselves, not Romuald's, and the opening point of the story would be simply that a dispute had arisen between the would-be convent developers and others of their own brethren. The arguing of the case before Romuald in the second sentence would then make much greater sense, and the new unanimity described in the third - which, as the story stands, simply happens into existence without any apparent word or deed on the part of the saint to bring it about - would be the result of the litigants' acceptance of his judgment or "decree" that they should go ahead. The use of the word "**hospitium**", rather than "**cella**", in the fourth

sentence, to denote the building in which each of the litigants was staying, would then also be explained; these were not brethren of the place in which Romuald was then resident but visitors resorting to him for his counsel in this particular matter. The reason for Damian's removal of the decree to the head of the story would presumably be that he understood Romuald, as has been seen repeatedly throughout the **Life**, to have been a **master** of religious and **founder** of religious communities, a more commanding, focal and Christlike figure than a mere consultant or judge could be, however wise (and perhaps more so than the saint actually was).

The alternative is that the story did not originally involve Romuald at all. As he actually **does** nothing in it after initially commanding his disciples to build the convent, his involvement is not essential to it. In this case, the decree of the first sentence and the phrase "**ante venerabilem virum**" in the second have simply been added to the story, probably by the redactor. If Damian knew that the monks concerned were from a community that had been associated with Romuald, he might well have assumed both that their building of the convent was at the saint's behest and that the settlement of their dispute over it, amounting to a victory over the devil, was attributable to the intervention of his holy **virtus**.

The most remarkable act in the story is the rebuke of the storm and whirlwind. Somewhat reminiscent of Christ's own stilling of the storm[3], this is indeed a mighty work. In two of the Gospels the response of onlookers is, "Who is this then, that he commands even wind and water, and they obey him?"[4] "This question", G.B. Caird comments, "admitted of only one answer: this is the man [Christ] to whom God has entrusted the authority of his kingdom".[5] The present

disciple of Romuald is able to share in this through the authority over unclean spirits given by Christ, originally to His twelve disciples[6], and already exercised, explicitly or implicitly, several times by Romuald from chapter 7 through to the chapter before this one. This spectacular display of authority by the monk was almost certainly the climax of the story as Damian heard it - as it would remain without his appended comment - and it is notable that his comment does not underline it and attribute the **virtus** involved to Romuald's mediation but rather leaves it unremarked and draws attention back to the earlier part of the story. This accords with what Damian has said about miracles in the prologue: his intention is not to list miracles but to make an edifying record of the saint's **conversatio.** A number of miracles, including this one, have been incorporated because of their symbolic value in this connection, but Damian is evidently not very interested in the mere display of power by a brother of indeterminate **conversatio.**

Literal historicity

The most important historical issue raised by this chapter is Romuald's relationship with religious women. It was suggested in relation to chapter 35, where Damian minimally noted that the saint founded a female convent near Val di Castro, that he understood Romuald to have concerned himself with women to some extent but was willing only to mention this in the barest way because it was not an example he wanted to attract too much attention. The present story provides evidence that such activities were indeed contentious in Romuald's immediate **milieu.** Damian suggests no reason for this; the dispute itself and Romuald's instruction to build are both unexplained. It is possible that Damian's information was not

extensive, but it certainly would not have been beyond his powers to have offered some informed comment on the matter from his own general knowledge of Romuald and his circle. It seems clear enough that he is once again deliberately limiting his record of Romuald's mission to women.

Editorial discretion is probably the reason for this. It has been argued above that Damian's purpose is not so much to extol an individual or portray a personality as to set up a model.[7] It is acceptable, indeed probably to be regarded as admirable, that this standard hermit's charity extended to providing for female converts as well as male, and this fact may be openly recorded. Scandal, however, may result unless relations between male religious and women are handled with great discretion. Clearly someone had been scandalised over Valbona. In practice, not many male religious were concerned with such matters at any time in their lives - it is certainly not central to the eremitical **conversatio**[8] - and it is therefore discreet of the hagiographer to avoid both elaboration and emphasis lest he tempt to indiscreet imitation some brethren of whom such activity was not required.

The two chapters recording Romuald's activity among nuns, that is to say, are so thoroughly edited for Damian's own purposes that it is virtually impossible to see through them to the historical reality. In neither case is it shown that the nuns really owed much at all to Romuald, but in both cases Damian seems to be limiting what he tells us. It appears that in the present case some monks trod the classic path to a holy hermit when they were in doubt as to what they should do, but whether he thereafter involved himself in supervising their new convent is simply not stated.

The identity of Valbona, as Tabacco notes[9], is uncertain. Damian did not know or preferred not to mention the name of the male community involved.

The association between discipular discord and stormy wind may have been suggested by such a verse as **Proverbs** 11:29: **"Qui conturbat domum suam, possidebat ventos"**. The story could therefore have developed by elaboration from the simple historical fact that there was a dispute, although it is equally possible that the significance of a real storm that occurred at that time was immediately perceived.

NOTES

1. Or "decided"; decrevisset.
2. Or "dwelling" or "guest accommodation"; hospitium.
3. **Mark** 4:35-41; **Matthew** 8:23-27; **Luke** 8:22-25.
4. **Luke** 8:25; cf. **Matthew** 8:27.
5. G.B. Caird, **The Pelican New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel of St. Luke** (Harmondsworth, 1963), p.121.
6. **Mark** 6:7.
7. Cf. introduction n.25.
8. A recent general discussion of this issue can be found in Lawrence, pp.176-78; Romuald's milieu and Damian's attitude are considered more particularly in pp.131-132.
9. VR p.103n.2.

Three historiographical divisions may be identified here: (i) the first four sentences (to p.105 1.9), making the comparison; (ii) the fifth and sixth sentences (to p.106 1.1), an open comment on this; (iii) the last two sentences, recording that Romuald withdrew to Biforco as soon as he had established Sitria and suffered at the hands of the abbot of Biforco.

Damian's argument

(i) The new Nitria is described.

> And in such manner was [life] then lived in Sitria that it seemed, from the similarity not only of the name but also of the work, as if [it were] another Nitria, made anew. For they all went about on bare feet, were all unkempt[1], pale and satisfied with very great extremity in all things. No small number indeed, enclosed within doors [to which approach was] damned, seemed to be so dead to the world [that it was] as though they were already laid in the tomb. No one there knew wine unless it was someone who suffered a very severe illness.[2] But why do I speak of the monks, when even the very attendants of the monks[3] and the very keepers of [their] herds fasted, maintained silence, administered discipline mutually among themselves[4] and demanded penance for any idle words whatever?

These various holy accomplishments have appeared, some of them repeatedly, throughout the earlier chapters of the **Life**, associated with Romuald himself. Here, towards the end of the work, they are summed up in a single community of his disciples. This is the perfection of the religious **conversatio**, emulating the wonders of monastic antiquity, even Nitria of Egypt. Damian, as well as Damian's Romuald, lived for this.

(ii) The life there is virtual martyrdom.

> O [how] golden [was] the world[5] of Romuald, which, even though it knew not the torments of persecutors, nonetheless lacked nothing in voluntary martyrdom. A golden world, I say, that nourished so many citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem among the wild beasts of the mountains and the woods.

The voluntary martyrdom that is the mark of the category of confessor saints and has been repeatedly attributed to Romuald thus extends to a whole community. This nursery of citizens of Heaven lies, like Val di Castro, among the peaks and woods of the **spirituales magni**.[6] The brethren are kept company there by the wild beasts who had been the companions of Christ Himself in the wilderness during His temptation by Satan.[7] So Sitria is virtually a community of saints. The twin themes of Paradise restored and Heaven anticipated in the Romualdine hermitages are thus brought to their climax.

(iii) Romuald leaves when Sitria has been organised and suffers at Biforco.

> And when, in time, there were so many brethren there that it was hardly possible for all of them to dwell [together] in that place, then Romuald - a monastery having been built there and an abbot set over it - withdrew to dwell at Biforco, observing inviolate silence. And in that place, [because], he wanted to live spiritually and keep to the way of rectitude, he suffered the great injustice of persecution by him.

The brethren of Sitria have been gathered into **Romuald's** golden world, into **his** sanctity, not **vice versa**. Since he has left Sant 'Apollinare the saint has never really settled in any community and has removed himself from each once his work has been completed there.[8] Romuald's peculiar passion throughout the **Life** is at the hands of monks. He has already suffered the most grievous injuries of all at Sitria (in chapter 49), and it has been after submitting to "penitence" there for a gross evil of which he was not guilty that he has been rapt into Heaven while celebrating mass (in chapter 50). It has been at Sitria

also, following this rapture, that he has become so strong a holy champion that he is a virtual tempter of demons. In all these ways he has participated in the passion and victory of Christ on Sitria's behalf as well as his own, and now, as far as Sitria is concerned, his work is perfected. He will henceforth suffer abuse and rejection there no more than the risen Christ suffers it in Heaven from the saved. Romuald's life, however, is not yet over. He will suffer for monks to the end, so Damian has him leave immediately for Biforco, by whose brethren he has hitherto been simply ignored, to suffer for them too.

Damian's sources

As remarked above, the first section, which compares Sitria to Nitria, recapitulates themes already developed in the Life. There is in fact no new practice described. The comparison, moreover, is not attributed to the brethren themselves; Damian does not say that they imitated Nitria consciously and peculiarly. There is therefore no narrative here, only the statement of comparison and a summary of religious practices. If these latter are studied closely, it becomes evident that Damian would scarcely have needed much detail in his information about Sitria in Romuald's day to have composed the passage. Some of the brethren were very strictly enclosed; none of them took wine - except those who needed it; they all fasted - but how rigorously is not indicated; they were all devoted to the virtue of silence - but the punishment of brethren who used unnecessary words suggests that it was not an unbroken silence, like Romuald's, but simply routine, perhaps as prescribed in the Rule of St. Benedict[9]; they were all unkempt - but Damian does not say how unkempt; nor does he offer a standard of pallor or of extremity in all things. All

these points are in fact weakly made and could be based in no more than a general knowledge of the spiritual quality of the community, although Damian would presumably have needed more precise information to be able to state that all the brethren went barefoot and that they administered flagellation to each other. It may also be noted that the spiritual accomplishments described are in fact much less extreme than those recorded in the monastic literature of antiquity[10]; it is particularly notable that there is no mention of the dreadful combat with demons that figures so largely there, and which underlies Romuald's own struggles (comparatively brief though Damian's accounts of these are) elsewhere in the **Life**. As with Pereo in chapter 26, Damian is pastorally discreet enough to present assiduous monks of his own time as equals and heirs to the almost unbelievable champions of antiquity, obscuring the shortfall by invoking the authority of marvellous St. Romuald. Although his account of Sitria is likely to be roughly true, his immediate source for this picture of it is probably in fact his own distillation of various strands of monastic tradition - ancient, Benedictine and Romualdine; it is an idealised summary.

The sentences extolling the golden world, although drawing on well-known traditional themes, as noted above, are straightforwardly editorial.

The third section's statement that Romuald removed to Biforco when Sitria had grown large and had been soundly established, to suffer at the hands of Biforco's abbot, reads like a simple statement of facts. There is, however, no sign in it of a narrative that might have preserved such facts and they are in any case vague. There is no call to Biforco, but Damian has already established in chapter 49, when

Romuald first arrived at Sitria, that such moves at such times were his custom. The use of the ablative absolute - "**monasterio ibi constructo et abbate preposito**" - avoids the definite claim that Romuald was actually reponsible for these new developments at Sitria. No such word as **protinus, statim, mox** - used so frequently in the **Life** - appears here to fix a close relationship in time between the improvements and the departure. Suffering at the hands of abbots is a constant throughout the **Life.** The inference of all this is that Damian has again worked from purely general knowledge. The only point he could not have deduced is the phrase "**Bifurcum ad habitandum**". Presumably, therefore, he knew of a removal from Sitria, which was near his own hermitage of Fonte Avellana, to Biforco in the later years of Romuald's life and worked up the section from that.

Literal historicity

Damian was clearly impressed by the quality of nearby Sitria's **conversatio** and there is no reason to doubt that his description, although imprecise and probably exaggerated, is faithful to its spirit.[11] To what degree Romuald was really responsible for Sitria, however, is not at all clear. Even as Damian tells the story (here and in chapters 49-52) it is not stated that he was the pioneer of the site or led the brethren in any way other than by example.

NOTES

1. For bare feet and no bathing in Damian's general teaching on the spiritual life, cf. Blum, Peter **Damian**, op.cit., p.123.
2. On this discretionary concession, cf. Leclercq, Pierre **Damien**, op.cit., p.45. Cf. also Tabacco, VR p.105n.5.
3. Monachorum famuli. Cf. Tabacco, VR p.105n.6.
4. Cf. c.14 n.1.
5. Or "age"; seculum.
6. Cf. 35, especially n.6 and c.1, especially n.14.
7. Cf. **Mark** 1:13, Marsh, op.cit., p.64, commenting on this verse, shows that the association between righteous men, wild beasts

and Paradise restored, which is very common in mediaeval literature, is in fact as old as the Old Testament. Damian evidently felt that he needed to make only the barest allusion to the wild beasts for his point to be taken. In Op.15, **De suae congregationis institutis**, c.2, PL145, 338A, he cites the same verse as evidence that, after Old Testament figures, eremitism originated with Christ, "eratque cum bestiis."

8. Cf. c.49 section (ii).
9. **Ben. Reg.** cc. 6 & 42.
10. Summarised by Lawrence, pp.5-6.
11. Tabacco, **Romualdo**, pp.80-81, shows that the Sitria here described is larger and the account of its ascetic practices much richer than what can be learnt about the Romualdine hermitages from episcopal documents predating the VR. He also points out that the imitation of the monks by the famuli and the voluntary flagellations follow forms of penitence specially developed at Fonte Avellana and in Damian's later works; cf. M. della Santa, **Ricerche sull'idea monastica di san Pier Damiani** (Arezzo, 1961), pp.51 ff. & 65 ff.

CHAPTER 65 ROMUALD OBTAINS THE MONASTERY OF MONTE AMIATA FROM THE EMPEROR HENRY II

One of the longest oral records in the **Life** may be discerned in this chapter, followed by a possibly surmised note and a linking comment. The chapter may therefore be divided into three: (i) all of it except for the last sentences (to p.108 l.17), telling the story; (ii) the penultimate sentence (to p.108 l.20); (iii) the last sentence.

Damian's argument

What Damian intends to convey is straightforward:

(i) Henry seeks an audience and grants Monte Amiata.

> Meanwhile the Emperor Henry came into Italy from the regions beyond the mountains [from north of the Alps] [and] sent an embassy to entreat the blessed man to deign to come to him, promising that he would do whatever he might command if he would not deny him his audience. And when the venerable man quite refused to break his silence, all the disciples began unanimously to implore him, "Master, you see that we who follow you are now so many that we cannot fittingly live here. Please go, therefore, and request from the emperor some great monastery and settle there the multitude of those who follow you." The sainted man - I do not know whether [he had] now received a revelation or a sudden inspiration from God - confidently wrote to them, "[You may] know that you shall have the monastery of Monte Amiata by gift of the king. Only just consider whom you ought to appoint as abbot of the place." And so he proceeded to the king in inviolate silence. The king at once arose to [greet] him, [and moved] by the great affection of his heart[1], broke out in these words.[2] "O would that my soul were in your body!" He then suppliantly implored [him] to speak, [but] could not obtain this that day.
>
> Now on the next day, [when] Romuald came to the palace, lo, a multitude of Germans ran together, jostling, from one direction and another, humbly bowed their heads in greeting and cautiously plucked at the hairs of the skin vestment in which he was dressed, putting them away as sacred relics to be taken earnestly to [their] fatherland. This in fact cast the venerable man into such depression that, had he not yielded to the opposition of [his] disciples, he would have gone back to [his] cell immediately. Having thus come to the king, he spoke to him no small amount about restoring the rights of churches,

about the violence of the powerful, about the oppression of the poor, and after much [such discourse] sought a monastery from him for his disciples. The king presently made the monastery of Monte Amiata over to him, and expelled the abbot from the place because he was guilty of many evils.

(ii) Romuald is persecuted by two abbots of the place.

So great were the adversities the sainted man endured there, not only from him who had been expelled but also from [the man] whom he had himself appointed abbot from among his disciples, [that although] he indeed was able to bear [them] most patiently, we, even if the eloquence were there, could not relate them.

(iii) An example of God's helping him will be given.

But in what matter God helped him in all matters, it will suffice to show by one example, as what happened as to the remainder will become clear to any judicious person.

Damian's sources

Romuald's transactions with Henry II, like those with Otto III, clearly left a deep impression on the local monastic world and there is no reason to doubt that the main part of this chapter reached Damian in more or less the form in which it now appears. The narrative is quite coherent, with none of the hiccups or joints that mar the stories of composite origin. Functionally, it could serve in oral transmission both to record the emperor's exemplary reverence to the saint and to explain what was apparently a major reform of Monte Amiata. Both of these would have continued to be of considerable interest to brethren in any way connected with that house.

The second-last sentence of the chapter, in which Damian is unable to tell how greatly Romuald suffered at the hands of the two abbots, appears to be of quite different status. Damian shows no sign of knowing any story to support his claim and is likely once again to

have deduced the persecution **a priori**, especially in the case of the new abbot, who is thus assimilated to virtually every other abbot in the **Life**. The case of the deposed abbot raises greater difficulties. Damian's wording at the end of the previous section - "**monasterium tradidit, et abbatem ... foras eiecit**" - might be taken to mean that the sinful prelate was not merely deposed from office but ejected from the house altogether, and yet it now appears that he has not actually gone away. Although it is technically possible that he tormented the monastery from outside, the cause of this apparent inconsistency is probably that Damian has not been able to show any involvement by Romuald in the deposition. Although he has asked for a monastery, expecting to get Monte Amiata, the story evidently did not record his asking also for the deposition of the abbot, let alone for his effecting it. That means that the victory over evil inherent in such a monastic reform has here been won solely through an act of imperial authority, of which the saint and his disciples stand simply as beneficiaries. Imperial co-operation caused Damian no difficulties, but that any layman could co-operate so mightily as virtually to win a saint's battles for him is clearly impossible; therefore the expelled abbot must have in fact remained to persecute and tempt Romuald as a demonic agent, as monks have done since the failure of the devil's direct attacks in chapter 17, and Romuald acted as the constituting authority for his successor.

The third section is plainly editorial.

Literal historicity

No previous chapter of the **Life** has prepared for Romuald's asking for an already established abbey in response to an overcrowding problem.

Throughout the work he has been gathering large numbers of converts and settling them on new sites where new buildings have been erected to accommodate them. It seems out of character for the saint now to appear as a monastic predator. Moreover, the story does not record the expulsion of a company of wicked monks with the abbot, but his alone; which would suggest not that the place was in fact resettled so much as that it was reformed by external authority[3], a colony of Romuald's disciples being settled in the community for that purpose. Romuald has not hitherto been presented as this kind of reformer either, except in the case of his highly questionable attempt to depose the simoniacal abbot of Sant 'Apollinare in chapter 41; and here he is neither credited with the initiative or execution of the reform nor even shown to have spent any significant time at Monte Amiata. Although it would be idle to speculate on the exact course of events on the basis of such flimsy evidence, it may be suspected that the suggestion that Monte Amiata be colonised and reformed was not made by Romuald - as the story stands he does not ask for the house by name - and that therefore the initiative did not come from any monkish party of his but from the imperial party who had called the meeting to discuss the matter, and that disciples of Romuald took on the task with only a very uncertain degree of personal supervision by him. In this case, the centrality of the saint's role has been exaggerated after the event, overpopulation elsewhere has been deduced to be his motivation because it was known that he did not go to the emperor to seek the community's reform, and his foreknowledge that Monte Amiata would be granted has been supposed to offset his failure to ask for it.

However all this may be, there is no reason to doubt that Henry was awed by the presence of the silent ascetic or that this living

manifestation of holiness in their midst caused marvel and excitement among his retinue.

NOTES

1. Cor.
2. Literally, "in this voice".
3. As provided for by the **Ben. Reg.** c.64.

CHAPTER 66 ROMUALD IS INVOKED TO SAVE A MONK WHO IS PLOTTING TO KILL HIM

This shorter chapter comprises one story and a comment on it. The comment occupies the last sentence.

Damian's argument

(i) A demon tries to strangle the monk.

> A certain monk, inflamed to an insane fury against him, secretly sharpened a knife, put it away and began to await the opportunity of a suitable time to kill the blessed man. But in the night, as he rested, weighed down by sleep, lo, he saw an evil spirit rushing monstrously upon him. [The spirit] threw a twist of twigs onto his neck [and] tried to squeeze his throat closed so ferociously that [the man] was quickly driven to the very point of expiring. Then the monk, brought by the spirit to death's door[1], implored Romuald to help him. [Romuald], as it seemed to the monk, flew there at once [and] seized him from the hands of the wicked foe. So then [the monk] threw himself prostrate at the venerable man's feet, begged him to inspect the bruise in his neck and confessed his sin of malice without hesitation. Then he returned thanks to [Romuald] for the preservation of [his] life and accepted the penance for so great a wrong.

As in chapters 10 and 41, the breath may be taken as symbolic of the spirit, and sleep may again represent contemplation.[2] It has been thoroughly demonstrated that Romuald is the channel through which the vivifying Holy Spirit comes to those to whom he is sent. The brother who plots to destroy Romuald therefore lays himself open to the powers of evil, to be himself choked off from the Spirit, to be shaken from his own contemplation and thus to be himself destroyed. Once again the punishment is implicit in the crime.

The monk, however, is not presented as the instigator of the crime. The phrase "**vesano ... furore succensus**" carries a passive sense and implies that the monk is already manipulated by the demon from the

beginning of the story, just as the various insane adversaries of Romuald who have been cured earlier in the **Life** have been diabolically possessed. The last sentence of the previous chapter has promised that this story will demonstrate representatively how God helped Romuald in all matters. It turns out that He does so not by revealing the plot to the saint so that he may take measures to avoid martyrdom but by granting the sinner himself clear vision of what the demon is doing to him, thus prompting him to invoke Romuald as his immediate saviour. God thus helps Romuald, even as He denies him martyrdom, by granting him the glory of fulfilling his vocation through the salvation of the sinner's soul. This strange, unworldly, holy figure, at whom so many marvel, serves to provoke a spiritual crisis in the hitherto complacent. Out of this comes first the anger of resentment and then the penitent conversion that seeks association into his saving sanctity:

(ii) The sinner finds life in Romuald.

> And thus he who lay in wait to seize the life from Romuald, now obtained [the favour][3] of the preservation of even his own [life] through that same most sainted man, and he escaped the peril of his own death through him to whom he had endeavoured to bring death.

Thus Damian concludes the chapter by spelling out its main point, clearly a central one in the eremitical theology he is propounding: the decisive test of the monk's religion is his relationship to Romuald. As the saint, when attacked by demons, casts himself on God, in Whom he lives and dies, so his disciple casts himself on Romuald and will henceforth live and die in a subordinate mystical union with him.

Damian's sources

It is not clear whether Damian understood Romuald to be physically present at the end of this event. The first section, up to the falling at the saint's feet for inspection of the wound and receipt of penance instructions, reads like a vision story: seeing the demon menace him so perilously, the monk invokes Romuald in prayer and sees too his miraculous response. It is not impossible for the last act also to be understood as part of the vision, but it is doubtful that that is what Damian intends. It is also puzzling that the brother shows his wound to Romuald, as if to prove the reality of the attack, when the saint has just seized him from the devil's very hands. The story is therefore probably not in its original form. It probably was indeed a vision story, most likely dating from after Romuald's death, that has been reinterpreted as an event that occurred during his lifetime. In this case the murderous sharpening of the knife for an attack on Romuald himself and the showing of the wound are perhaps elaborations that developed to heighten the significance of the story as its nature changed. However this may be, it seems that the rescue that is at the centre of the story naturally makes the point for which Damian has used it and it is therefore likely that he has recorded approximately what he heard.

The comment of the second section is plainly editorial.

Literal historicity

It is not unlikely that a monk saw a vision like this one and that the story was used thereafter to promote Romuald's cult and propagate the **conversatio** associated with him.

NOTES

1. In extremo.
2. Cf. c.1 n.12 & c.22 n.5.
3. Meruit; Cf. c.57 section (v).

CHAPTER 67 HE PROPHESIES THE ARRIVAL OF FOOD IN A FLOOD

This chapter also comprises one story, but in this case it is preceded by an introductory note. The chapter may therefore be divided in two: (i) the first two sentences (to p.109 l.22); (ii) the rest of the chapter.

Damian's argument

The introductory note is self-explanatory:

(i) Romuald eats with the brethren except during Lent.

> Now the sainted man had the custom, when he was in charge of a monastery, that, except when he fasted, he would come each day to the common table with the brethren [and] eat just one cooked dish [with them]. Then after that [he would be] intent on the reading or whatever else was being done before them collectively. During the time of Lent, however, he would stay continuously in [his] little cell unless forced by unavoidable necessity.

(ii) He makes the prophecy.

> While, therefore, the most blessed man was ruling the aforesaid community [Monte Amiata], he searched through nearby places in the mountains with [his] disciples as the Lenten fast approached, [for] somewhere he could make a hermitage. And while they were dragging on their searching for long periods, they were suddenly trapped by water that flooded all round [them], such that neither were they themselves now able to go back nor, for some time, was anyone from the monastery able to cross over to them. They survived, however, on a quantity of chestnuts that they had taken with them. And when Sunday came and no other hope of food any longer remained, the brethren began to peel the very few chestnuts that remained, and now somewhat hesitantly, to prepare a last meal from these. Romuald, however, cheerful of face as he always was, said confidently that unless God should send somebody to him with bread, he would eat nothing whatever that day. Now the disciples wondered among themselves [as to] what hope [it was] in which he expected this, but certain that the master could not promise anything rashly, now began confidently to await food fit for such a rite. And then, as the sixth hour of the day was now drawing near, lo, three men arrived, laden with bread and wine and other foods. They said that they had reached them [only]

> with much travail [and] from a long way away. And so they were all then filled with spiritual gladness [and] praised God, and as they took the food they realised beyond doubt that the sainted man had realised this by revelation from Heaven.

Waters running between mountains are a standard symbol of the wisdom of God.[1] Lent is the season from which eremitism was believed to have developed; the hermit's is a Lenten life.[2] The waters' isolation of Romuald and his disciples as they search the heights for their Lenten hermitage may therefore symbolise the essential isolation of eremitism. As they linger in their contemplative heights, the hermits are in time cut off from meaningful contact with the coenobites by the inspired insight that flows down from the peaks of the **spirituales magni**[3] and rises round them. The coenobites can no longer reach them and they themselves cannot go back. There is no longer any possibility of their being maintained by spiritual nourishment from the **coenobium.**

Like all Christians, however, they must feed on Christ. This supreme **convivium**, as instituted by Christ as His own Last Supper on earth, is an intrinsically communal one. The **corpus Christi** that sustains them is, in one of its senses, the Church as Christian community.[4] The problem for the brethren in the mountains is that they are now isolated from their community and its common table. They think to make an **ultimum convivium** of the chestnuts, doubting even as they do so that this is possible. Romuald, however, knows that the bread of Christ will be sent to them, however great the evident difficulties.

The sixth hour of the day is that at which salvation was announced to Peter to have been extended to all nations. Going up onto a housetop to pray, and becoming hungry there, he saw a vision in which animals and birds came down to him in a sheet from Heaven and were offered to

him as food by the voice of God Himself. Refusing the creatures because they were ritually unclean, Peter was rebuked by God, who announced that He Himself had cleansed them. The meaning of this vision became clear to Peter when three men arrived, sent by a Roman centurion angelically instructed to do so; Peter was no longer to isolate himself from the Gentiles, preaching Christ to His fellow Jews alone, because anyone who feared God and did what was right was acceptable in His sight.[5] In a comment of Cyprian's, both the cleansing and the announcement to Peter are associated with the sixth hour:

> **Petrus hora sexta in tectum superius ascendens signo pariter et voce Dei monentis instructus est, ut omnes ad gratiam salutis admitteret, cum de emundandis gentibus ante dubitaret. Et Dominus hora sexta crucifixus ad nonam peccata nostra sanguine suo abluit et ut redimire et vivificare nos posset ...**[6]

The three men who struggle through to Romuald's isolated brethren from far-off parts are not necessarily monks or priests. As Christianity is not only for Jews, so eremitism is not only for former coenobites. Cut off from their former community, the hermits who have come from the monastery find themselves joined in salutary communion in their heights by tenacious men from the outside world[7]; which none of them but Romuald had expected.

These three men bring the bread the brethren need. When Saul was anointed king of Israel by Samuel, one of the signs verifying his vocation by God was that he too - as prophesied to him by Samuel - met three men bearing bread, wine and, in their instance, kids. Saul's anointing is typologically related to Christ's own kingship of the new Israel, the Christian community.[8] The bread and wine they bore foreshadowed the Eucharist, Christ's body and blood - again, in one sense, the Christian community. Thus, in a physical isolation that

appeared absolute to their human eyes, the brethren find themselves feeding and sacrificing in mystical union with Christ and His Church through time and space, with brethren from other places and forerunners from other ages. Romuald, their guiding prophet, knew that it would be so.

Damian's sources

Every detail of the second and main part of this chapter is allegorically or typologically significant. As it is therefore "true" in a "higher" sense than the merely literal - the central prophecy is really much more than that literal bread will be provided on one day at one prospective hermitage - it is the kind of story that Damian could honestly have elaborated himself in large measure. It is therefore questionable whether it originally circulated orally in quite its present form. Although it also functions successfully enough as a narrative, moreover, it raises certain difficulties which give some clues as to its earlier form and function.

For as it now appears, its twin points are that God sent bread and wine through to the party when the need arose - implicitly a miracle - and that Romuald had prophesied that He would do so. These two points, however, are not equal, in that the prophecy concerns the advent of the relief and is authenticated by it - the prophecy story could not stand without the record of its fulfilment - whereas the advent of the relief could be told of without the prophecy. This prophecy, when considered purely as part of the narrative, is indeed rather inconsequential, for it merely offers some comfort to the brethren a short period before the arrival of the actual relief. There is no suggestion that their eating the few chestnuts that

remained would have prevented their subsequent communion through the bread and wine. It would seem that the miracle of divine provision, therefore, ought to be the fundamental point of the chapter, with the prophecy a likely elaboration to it, and yet it is only minimally described and the very heart of it, the means by which the three men made their way through or over the otherwise impassable floodwaters, is missing; **"cum multa labore"** is all that Damian can say, which is not really adequate to show that divine intervention was needed to get them through with the bread.[9] It may be suspected, therefore, that the story was not originally a provision story at all but simply a prophecy or extended-vision story (perhaps like that of chapter 31 where Romuald at Parenzo has foreseen the advent of brethren from Biforco), subsequently elaborated into a miracle.

The introductory note about Romuald's attendance at the common tables of monasteries in which he stayed is a generalising summary. It shows no necessary connection with Monte Amiata.

Literal historicity

The event behind the prophecy story is not recoverable from the story that remains. Whether any lasting hermitage was in fact established cannot be determined from this.[10]

That Romuald went every day to the common table when he was not especially fasting, even allowing that he did so only during his coenobitic sojourns, weakens the predominant image of the very reclusive and almost permanently fasting holy man that Damian has hitherto built up, but there is no reason to doubt that it is true. That he ate just a very little each day conforms to what is reported

in chapter 9. It was probably a well-known point of his teaching.

That Romuald in any practical sense "ruled" Monte Amiata, although concordant with chapter 65, is even less convincingly established here than there. All Romuald does for the brethren of Monte Amiata in this chapter is eat with them for a while.

NOTES

1. Cf. Augustine, **Enarrationes in Ps.** CIII, S.III, 2, CCSL, 40, p.1, 499.
2. Cf. c.56 n.2.
3. Cf. c.35 n.6.
4. Cf. **1st Corinthians** 10:16-17.
5. **Acts** 10.
6. **De dominica oratione**, 34, CCSL, III A, pp.111-112. Cf. Tertullian: "Petrus, qua die visionem communitatis omnis in illo vasculo expertus est, sexta hora orandi gratia ascenderat in superiora..." **De oratione**, XXV, 1-3, CCSL, I, p.272.
7. Damian himself had not passed through a coenobium before his entry to Fonte Avellana. As prior there, he later accepted converts directly from the world and justified doing so. Cf. Leclercq, **Pierre Damien**, op.cit., pp. 57-58. Cf. also c.4 section (ii).
8. On Saul as "Christus Domini" - the Lord's anointed one, cf. **Collectanea in Vetus Testamentum**, PL145, 1093D-1094A.
9. Cf. c.29, where the messenger of John and Benedict is angelically directed to a boat waiting to bear him over a river.
10. Cf. Tabacco, VR p.107 n.2.

CHAPTER 68 A FISH IS FOUND FOR ROMUALD IN AN ALMOST DRY STREAM

This later chapter before the account of Romuald's death also comprises a single story. It is followed by a comment of half a sentence and preceded and followed by minimal connecting passages of one short sentence each. Four sections may therefore be distinguished: (i) the first sentence (to p.110 1.18), in which Romuald returns to Sitria; (ii) the second sentence to mid-way through the fifth (at the end of 1.5, p.111); (iii) the remainder of the fifth sentence (to p.111 1.7), commenting on it; (iv) the last sentence, introducing the death.

Damian's argument

(i) The setting is Sitria.

> At a certain time, the venerable man came to Sitria.

(ii) The fish is found.

> As he had been fasting before this and the brethren, being in high mountains, did not have the fish that they would lay before him to eat, they began, somewhat perplexed, to feel ashamed among themselves and to think worriedly about what they could get for so venerable a guest. Then a certain brother, no doubt divinely inspired, ran hurriedly to the almost dry stream that flowed past nearby, where there was in fact only a scant quantity of even water; never had a fish been seen there at all. And so the brother began reverently beseeching God that He Who could bring forth water for the people of Israel from a dry rock would Himself deign to show him a fish in the brook [although it was] drying up. Then immediately thrusting [his] hand into the scanty water, he found a fish, which was able to suffice the blessed man plentifully for his repast.

Fish, like bread, is a Eucharistic symbol, and one particularly linked to the idea of the eschatological repast and the theme of Paradise restored.[1] The water from the rock is also a type of the Eucharist, the rock itself representing Christ.[2] The story thus shows that,

before the miracle, the sacramental life at Sitria, in the sense of participation in Christ and His mystical body[3], was lacking: only a little water and none of the fish that proves it to be life-giving water. As in the previous chapter, the community cannot of its own resources provide the saint with the spiritual feast, the holy communion with God and His Church, that is fit for him. God must again send it directly in a providential miracle.

(iii) A veritable fish-pond is created.

> Clearly, [when] God provided the meal for His servant, [it was] as though they were found, on a dry and stony mountain, a fish-pond in a valley full of fish.

The fish is also a baptismal symbol. As Christ is likened to a fish, so also are Christian converts likened to fish, from the Gospels themselves onwards.[4] Allowing also for the concept of monastic conversion as second baptism[5], what happens on the arid mountain is that God brings forth for Romuald a bountiful and self-renewing supply of converts, vivified by His own saving power, the water of life. Romuald may henceforth banquet on Christ and on these simultaneously. Given the history of the fish tradition and the proximity of his death, this meal is probably to be understood at least partly eschatologically: Romuald still enjoys this communion with Sitria at the supernal banquet in Heaven.

(iv) This brings his life to an end.

> But because we believe that these [points] about the blessed man's life, which undoubtedly are [but] a few of the many things that are said [of him], are enough, we come now to [his] departure [from this world].[6]

Damian's sources

As with the previous chapter, it is unlikely that this story originally had quite the meaning and form it has now. For if the comment about the fish-pond which constitutes the third section and which is clearly editorial, is set aside, what remains is a story not dissimilar to that of the previous chapter, in which a religious has a prophetic revelation that special food will be forthcoming from an unexpected source at just the moment it is required, and is proven right. In this case, however, the religious is not Romuald, and yet the story is nonetheless told to his glory, not that of the "certain brother". Romuald's role in the story is indeed so entirely passive that it could stand equally well without him, so long as some reason were given for the need for a fish. It may be suspected, therefore, that even if Romuald had been associated with the story from its origin, it was previously told to demonstrate God's caring provision for Sitria itself rather than for this one man, however holy. The appended comparison of Sitria to a bountiful fish-pond providing food for Romuald does not seem very appropriate, after all, to a story in which only one fish has been produced.

Literal historicity

Unless this story is accepted as literally true, it preserves no useful detail about either Romuald or Sitria.

NOTES

1. Cf. J. Daniélou, "La typologie biblique traditionelle dans la liturgie du moyen-âge", in **SSSpoleto**, 10 [1962], **La Bibbia nell'alto medioevo** (1963), pp. 143-145; also Marsh, op.cit., pp. 665-66.
2. This typology is explained by St. Paul himself: 1st **Corinthians** 10:4. Daniélou, **Shadows to Reality** (op.cit.), pp. 161-62, shows that the community in the desert who received the water from the

rock were interpreted as a type of the Christian community.

3. Cf. c.67 n.4.
4. Cf. n.1 above.
5. Cf. c.52 n.4.
6. Or "going over"; transitus.

CHAPTER 69 ROMUALD DIES AT VAL DI CASTRO

Five historiographical divisions may be made in this chapter: (i) the first sentence, excusing the brevity of the **Life**; (ii) the second to tenth sentences (to p.112 1.21), describing the death; (iii) the eleventh and twelfth sentences (to p.112 1.24), proving Romuald's acceptance into Heaven; (iv) the thirteenth sentence (to p.113 1.2), summarising his life-span; (v) the final sentence, in which the saint is crowned.

Damian's argument

What Damian intends to convey appears straightforward almost throughout. He begins with a generalising summary:

(i) No more can be said of his life.

> The sainted man, in short, lived in many other places, [and] endured many other evils, especially from his disciples, and many more were the miracles worked through him, which we [shall] pass by [without] describing [them], because we seek to avoid the prolixity of a longer composition.

(ii) He dies.

> After all the places in which he lived, then, he returned at the last, when he in time saw that his end was imminent, to the monastery that he had built in Val di Castro. There he undoubtingly awaited [his] coming passing, organising a cell with an oratory to be built for him, in which to be shut away and observe silence through to death. In fact twenty years before the end of [his] life he had clearly predicted to his disciples that he was bound[1] to take his rest [2] in the aforesaid monastery, and with no one assisting [him] or dispensing funerary obsequies, he would be unshackled to breathe out [his] spirit. And so the reclusory was made, [and] while his mind was made up that he ought to be enclosed at once, his body began to grow more and more oppressive with its afflictions and now to decline not from illness so much as from the debilitating decay of old age. For from about the middle of the year, a great excess of phlegm, with all the rottenness of a diseased lung, poured out of him, and a cough troubled him with severe

breathlessness. The sainted man, however, took no rest[3] on this account either by lying in bed or, in so far as it was possible, by relaxing the rigour of his customary fast. One day, then, his bodily strength began little by little to desert him and he began to be more severely tired out by the affliction attacking [him]. And so, [as] the sun was now sinking to [its] setting, he directed the two brethren who were assisting [him] to go outside, to close the little cell's door behind them and to return to him at daybreak to celebrate the morning hymns with him. And as they left reluctantly, as [they were] concerned about his end, they did not hurry immediately [away] to [their] rest[4] but, worried in case the master should happen to pass on, they hid a talent of precious treasure near the little cell [and] watched. They waited thus for some time, [and] as they listened carefully, each in turn, ears alert, and heard neither the movement of a body nor the sound of a voice, they now correctly guessed what had occurred, flung open the door, burst in apace, lit a light and found the holy corpse lying face upwards, the blessed soul rapt into Heaven.

(iii) His death prophecy proves that he has gone to Heaven.

And so there he lay, like a heavenly pearl then neglected [but] soon to be put back[5] with honour in the treasury of the highest King. Undoubtedly, he who thus passed on as he predicted, crossed to that place to which he hoped [to go].

(iv) He was a hundred and twenty years old.

Now the most blessed man lived for a hundred and twenty years, of which he spent twenty in the world, led three in the monastery [and] passed ninety-seven in the eremitical way of life.

(v) God crowns him.

So now, among the living stones of the heavenly Jerusalem, he shines inexpressibly red, he exults with the fiery troops of blessed spirits, he is clad in the pure white stole of immortality, and he is crowned by the very King of Kings with a diadem sparkling for ever.

Damian's sources

The second and principal section, the death story proper, was evidently of great interest to Damian. It is full, literal and naturally coherent, certainly one of the longest reminiscences of

single origin in the work, and has therefore probably been less affected by Damian's redaction than almost any other story. It has clearly originated at Val di Castro. The three remaining sections are various kinds of comments on it.

The first of these, the third section, comparing Romuald to a pearl and drawing out the significance of the prophecy in the main story, was probably added to give an aura of holiness to a death story that might otherwise appear anticlimactic. Saints' deaths are often attended by supernatural signs - shafts of heavenly light, cells that will not burn when set on fire, choirs of angels, such as Damian has described in chapter 28 as marking the martyrdom of John and Benedict - and yet the great Saint Romuald has been found simply lying where he has collapsed. There is no sign of divine glorification to prove his sanctity. The comparison of the sprawled corpse to a scattered pearl (a second use in the **Life** of the traditional pearl/saint symbolism[6]) is cleverly used, together with the reminder of the prophecy, to counteract this ordinariness without in any way distorting the main story. It is certainly possible that this comment had already been added to the story before Damian heard about Romuald's death, but as they are not integrated - the story could stand perfectly well without the comment - it may be suspected that it is Damian's own.

That Romuald lived to be a hundred and twenty years old is almost certainly not true. The ultimate source of this belief is probably **Genesis** 6:1-3: **"Cumque coepissent homines multiplicari super terram Dixit Deus: 'Non permanebit spiritus meus in homine in aeternum, quia caro est; eruntque dies illius centum viginti annorum'."**

Thus Romuald has lived a perfect life-span. A comparison to Moses, who died at a hundred and twenty[7], may also be intended. As this detail is added as a statement of fact rather than interpretation, it is more likely than the preceding comment to have reached Damian already appended to the death story.[8] The division of the life-span into its three sections may have come with it, or from Sant' Apollinare, based on historical knowledge of Romuald's age at his entry to religion and the length of his initial stay at Classe, or it may similarly have been deduced from traditionally significant numbers; twenty, for example, is the age at which the Israelites were to be counted to begin paying the Lord's offering, to go forth to war and, in the case of the Levites, to begin work for the service of the house of the Lord.[9] As Damian has already recorded in the section of the **Life** dealing with Sant 'Apollinare that Romuald was initially three years there[10], but has not recorded the age of conversion there among the conversion stories, it is indeed possible that he has derived these details from separate sources - one from Sitria and one directly or indirectly from the Old Testament. The figure ninety-seven has probably been produced simply by subtraction.

The images of Romuald in Heaven that constitute the last section are all Biblical[11] and in common use.

Literal historicity

Prevision of death, as Tabacco notes[12], is found commonly in hagiography and it would therefore seem to be the most likely detail in the story proper (the second section) to have been added by later elaboration. Damian's initial statement of it, however, is in fact weakly expressed - "**in predicto monasterio oporteret eum quiescere**" -

and may have originally meant only that Romuald had indicated that he believed it to be the best place for him to try to return to die; the implication of **prophecy**, of foreknowledge that this would in fact happen, is much stronger in the appended comment. There is in any case no reason to believe that the rest of this story, which is as restrained as it is detailed, seriously distorts the facts.

NOTES

1. Oporteret eum; ambiguous between "it would be required of him" (duty) and "it would be inevitable for him" (foresight).
2. Quiescere. On the significance of this word, cf. c.1 n.12.
3. Acquieverat.
4. Ad quiescendum.
5. Or "stored away"; reponenda.
6. Cf. c.33 section (v).
7. **Deuteronomy** 31:2 and 34:7.
8. Franke, p.47, argued that Damian had derived this figure from Romuald's disciples. Franke devoted more than six pages (pp. 46-52) to proving that it was not likely that Romuald was really this old.
9. Cf. **Exodus** 30:14. **Numbers** 1:3, 1st **Chronicles** 23:24, etc.
10. C.2, last section.
11. On the red stone, cf. **Apocalypse** 21:18-20; on the white stola, 7:9-17. On such imagery more generally, cf. Ward, op.cit., p.169.
12. VR p.112 n.1.

CHAPTER 70 A DEMONIAC IS CURED BY ROMUALD'S HAIR-SHIRT

This miracle story is introduced and followed by yet further excuses for the brevity of the **Life**. It accordingly falls into three: (i) the first two sentences (to p.113 l.13), explaining why no sepulchre miracles are recorded; (ii) the third to sixth sentences (to p.114 l.4), telling the story; (iii) the final sentence, glorifying the body at Val di Castro by implication.

Damian's argument

(i) This miracle is but one of many.

> Now after the venerable man's most sacred passing, how many miracle signs did God display through him; who would ask to read [what was] accomplished when he would frequently be able to see yet new ones? Because, therefore, those miracles that occur at his sepulchre are so many, [and] as we deem it better to pass them all over in silence than to relate [only] a few, it will suffice us to set down just two that have been effected through the same most blessed confessor elsewhere.

These two miracles after death will conclusively demonstrate God's own authentication of the saint. They are probably the only two miracles in the **Life** included exclusively for this purpose, and therefore the only two not invested with didactic symbolic details but intended to be read simply as narratives.

The first is yet another cure of a possessed madman, which would be superfluous after the earlier examples except for the fact that it takes place **post mortem**:

(ii) The demon is driven out.

A certain brother, in short, who had been a disciple of the sainted man, had given a small oratory for [the good of] his soul. To this oratory he in fact sent the end of a sleeve cut from the blessed man's hairshirt and directed that it be deposited in honour beneath the altar. The carrier, however, neglected to set this [article that] had been sent [by him] beneath the altar as he had been ordered, but carelessly discarded it in a crack in the wall. Some time later, a certain demoniac happened to be brought to the aforesaid church. And as he stood in the middle, turning [his] head around from one side to the other to look at everything around [him], his fierce eyes began at length to fasten hideously on that very wall, and, intent on the spot where the little piece of the holy hairshirt lay, he [would] not stop shouting out, repetitive in [his] cry, "He is throwing me out, he is throwing me out"; and so shouting, [the demon] was forthwith expelled from him.

(iii) This proves the great power of the sainted body.

As is rightly understood from this, what could he not obtain through his own person in the presence of the divine mercy, [when] the demon could not stand before the slightest little portion of his clothing; and what would he who displayed such [great works when] absent, not achieve through the presence of [his] body?

Damian's sources

Damian does not make it clear what monastery received the miraculous article of clothing. As it is unlikely that he was ignorant of this or wished to keep it secret, and as in the introductory sentences he dismisses miracles that have occurred precisely at the sepulchre, not in Val di Castro generally, it seems that it is still that monastery he means. If so, it would probably also be the source of the story.

As the story appears in the most economical form suitable to make its point, and as that point would certainly have been of much interest at the monastery as well as to Damian, he has probably recorded more or less what he heard. The introduction and the appended comment, however, are clearly editorial.

Damian claims to know that numerous miracles have occurred at Romuald's sepulchre but shows no sign, here or elsewhere, of in fact knowing anything about them. His stated belief that it is better to relate none than only a few is left unjustified and is perhaps unconvincing. The final statement that the efficacy of the mere hair-shirt relic proves how great must be the power of the body may be taken as further evidence that he could not in fact give any examples to prove this directly. Taken with the comparative ordinariness of the death story in the previous chapter and the implication to come in the final chapter that the body was not fully honoured until several years after the death, this suggests that Romuald's cult developed only gradually and that the first miracles were recorded at the disciple's oratory some time before the shrine was constructed over the body. Indeed, the fact that the relic of this story was not deposited under the altar or enclosed in any kind of reliquary is perhaps evidence that even the hairshirt was not initially taken very seriously as a relic. Damian's exact wording, furthermore - **"frater ... basilicam pro anima sua monasterio dederat, ad quam videlicet basilicam extremitatem manice prescissam ex beati viri cilicio misit et sub altari honorifice recondi precepit"** - allows the possibility that the oratory existed for some time before this particular relic was sent there and was not actually founded in Romuald's memory. The apparent delay in the cult's development will be considered further in relation to chapter 72.

CHAPTER 71 A PLUNDERED COW IS RESTORED TO ITS OWNER

This short chapter relates a single, unelaborated story:

> And at another time, a certain steward violently took a poor woman's cow away in violence, and scorned to listen to her [as she] shouted out and begged [and] repeatedly prayed [him not to]. Taking two chicks from [her] hens, she ran immediately to the church that we have mentioned above and, throwing them and herself together before the altar, began crying out [through her] weeping in such words as these: "Oh, Saint Romuald, hear a wretched [woman], do not despise the desolate, and return to me my unjustly stolen mistress.[1]" A wonderful thing [happened]! The bailiff had yet scarcely gone an arrow-shot from the woman's house with that plunder, and suddenly [he was] stricken. He let go of the cow right there, [and] then, [when he] arrived home, immediately breathed his last.

Damian's argument

Unlike the story of the stolen cow of chapter 10, this miracle story includes the restoration of the stolen property to the injured party. The miracle is, in this sense, more effective. The death of the sinner, moreover, does not in this case appear as mere revenge but as a consequence of the action that effects the restoration. In this sense also, the divine intervention is more constructive. Nor is this story laced with such significant concepts as **gula**, **spes** and **concupiscentia**. Whereas chapter 10 has probably been allegorised, therefore, this chapter apparently tells a genuine and straightforward miracle story intended to be read simply literally.

Damian's sources

As it concerns the same altar, this story has probably come to Damian together with its twin that is now in the previous chapter. As in that case, there are no difficulties in the narrative that might indicate he has altered what he heard.

Literal historicity

This story has almost certainly been shaped to some extent by such Biblical passages as **Psalm 7:7-17**:

> **Iustum adiutorium meum a Domino ... arcum suum tetendit ... sagittas suas ardentibus effecit ... Convertetur dolor eius in caput eius, et in verticem ipsius iniquitas eius descendet.**

Although there is no reason to doubt that some particular, local dispute, possibly an interesting item of social history, lies behind the story, its details have been lost as the story has taken on the most economical form of a miracle story and it now seems irrecoverable.

NOTES

1. Gubernatrix.

CHAPTER 72 A SHRINE IS CONSTRUCTED FOR ROMUALD'S UNCORRUPTED BODY

Although the constituent parts of most of this chapter are less clearly distinguishable than those of some other chapters, five divisions will be made here: (i) the first half-sentence (to p.115 l.1), recording the papal licence for the shrine; (ii) the remainder of the first sentence (to p.115 l.3), in which a first reliquary is prepared; (iii) the second to fifth sentences (to p.115 l.13), telling of a vision concerning the size of the reliquary; (iv) the sixth and seventh sentences (to p.115 l.20), remarking on the condition of the disinterred body and telling how a new reliquary is prepared and stowed beneath the altar; (v) the last sentence, dating the death.

Damian's argument

(i) Rome grants Romuald an altar.

> Now after five years from the sainted man's passing, permission [was] granted to the monks by the apostolic see [for them] to build an altar over his venerable body.

Thus the cult of Romuald is authorised by the apostolic authority of the Church.

(ii) A small wooden reliquary is prepared.

> A certain brother Azo took himself off to the woods in order to make a small reliquary, which would have only just been able to take the sainted man's bones and dust.

(iii) Heaven foretells the inadequacies of this reliquary.

> And so, on the following night, a certain venerable old man appeared to one of the brethren as he slept [and] immediately asked him, "Where is the prior of this monastery?" When he said he did not know this, the old man at once added, "He has taken it on himself to go into the woods to build a reliquary, but the blessed man's body will not go into so small a container." So on the next day the prior returned, having assembled the reliquary, and he was thereupon questioned by the brother who had seen the vision, what [was] the reason [for his being] drawn to the woods. When, as though exhausted by the work, he would not say, the brother reported immediately [what] the reason for his journey [had been] and did not hide either from revealing, in sequence, what he himself had seen.

Thus the cult of Romuald is authorised implicitly by Heaven.

(iv) The body is found in good condition and is suitably reinterred.

> So the coffin [was] dug up [and] they found the sainted man's body nearly whole, sound and unmarred, [just] as it had been at the time when they had first made it over for burial, except that a certain fine mould was seen to have grown like down on some of its members. So the small reliquary that had been made [was] discarded, they at once prepared a container appropriate to the blessed body's measurements and stowing the holy relics away in this [for their] patronage, they solemnly consecrated the altar above.

Such incorruption of the body awaiting resurrection is a standard proof of sanctity.[1]

(v) Romuald died on the 19th June.

> Now the most blessed man passed on thirteen [days before] the calends of July [on the 19th June], in the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ Who lives and is glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit through eons of endless eons.[2] Amen.

Damian's sources

This fifth section, although presumably also from Val di Castro, clearly originated separately from the rest of the chapter. The first four sections, on the other hand, are quite well integrated and could have come to Damian as already a single story, but it seems likely

that it is in fact of composite, and perhaps threefold, origin.

For if the second and fourth sections, about Azo's casket-making, the surprisingly good condition of the body and the preparation and consecration of the bigger casket, are taken together, they could stand as a coherent and complete narrative without the first and third sections, if only a simple introductory statement that the body was to be translated to a new altar were prefixed. Instead, the existing, more informative first section, recording the papal grant, is used as such an introduction, but it clearly did not originate in so simple a form and is the merest remnant of a much longer story - which Damian shows no sign of knowing - of how Val di Castro sought and was granted this licence.

The third section raises greater difficulties in that it appears to record a celestial revelation that is only semi-relevant and rather inconsequential. For the old man in the vision informs the sleeping brother of the inadequacy of Azo's casket only after it is too late for him to intercept the prior, and on Azo's return the brother's report does not result in a larger casket's being built until after the body has in any case been dug up. The revelation, therefore, which at best would have served only to save the unnecessary construction of a small box, has no effect but to tell the monks a little in advance what they were going to find out anyway. As it stands, moreover, the story is concerned at greater length with the brother's supernatural ability to tell the prior where he has been and what he has been doing than it is with the size of the casket at all. It may or may not be significant also that Azo is not introduced as prior when he first appears in the second section and that the prior is not named as Azo here in the third section; the connection is made

only through the casket-making. Although it is not clear from these four sentences what the original form and function of the vision story may have been, all this suggests that it is not what it is now and that it has been added to the reinterment story at some time to make the point, albeit elliptically, that Heaven itself was concerned with Romuald's shrine and so effectively validated his cult.

Literal historicity

Setting aside the vision section, there is no reason to doubt that the information in this chapter is roughly true. Perhaps two facts are more significant than the others. Firstly, as Tabacco notes[3], this comes early in the history of papal promulgation of cults. Secondly, the inference may be drawn that Romuald's body was not honoured or protected as a relic in any way until years after his death. Although the information is slight, the story describes only the most modest provision being initially made for the body, even at the time of reinterment. Although it is clear from Bruno of Querfurt's record that Romuald was regarded as a notably holy man well within his own lifetime, this is further evidence that the full realisation of the magnitude of God's blessing to them that was the self-effacing holy hermit who had lived and died in humility among them, and to whose relics - still in their very midst - they could yet cling for patronage in this world and at the dawning of the next, came to the brethren of Val di Castro only gradually after the saint had already departed this world.

There is no reason to doubt that Romuald died on the 19th June. Damian, however, does not record the year and there is no alternative source that does. It is generally assumed that it was 1027, as it is

known from a donation document of that year that Romuald was already dead, but all that can be stated with certainty is that it was not later than 1027.[4]

NOTES

1. Cf. **Ps.** 15(16):10: "Quoniam non derelinques animam meam in inferno, nec dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem."
2. Or "for ever and ever"; per infinita secula seculorum.
3. VR p.115n.1.
4. Cf. Franke, op.cit., p.49n.14. Also Tabacco, VR p.115n.1, & Howe, op.cit., pp.115-16.

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